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FANCHETTE

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FANCHETTE

BY ONE OF HER ADMIRERS

John Esten Cooke

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FANCHETTE.

CHAPTER I.

AT MRS. DELANCY'S RECEPTION.

A VERY fine house on Washington Avenue was blazing with lights. From moment to moment elegant equipages deposited in front of the marble steps the representatives of the most agreeable society of the national capital. Within, the sight was dazzling. The hall and staircase were a crush, the reception rooms a sea of snowy shoulders and silks and lace, — pearl and sapphire with diamond foam. Conversation was nearly impossible. Every faculty of the mind was requisite to protect the person; to avoid the elbows of ambassadors, to spare the sweeping trains, and emerge in safety from the brilliant press which took one's breath away.

A single personage seemed to have found the secret of free movement, in spite of the crowd. This was the host, Colonel Delancy, a gentleman of sixty, with gray side whiskers, twinkling eyes, and the air of a philosopher. The Colonel was a man of the world, and noted for his kindly temper; had seen

everything and everybody worth seeing during half a century; said the best thing in life was good company seated at a good dinner; and seemed to enjoy himself quietly, after the fashion of the spectator of an excellent comedy.

"How do you do, Mr. Waring? I am very glad to see you," he said to a gentleman who had just entered.

"How do you do, my dear Colonel?" said Mr. Waring, shaking hands with his host. He was a man of about thirty, tall, smiling, with a slender moustache, a broad forehead, and an air of careless good-humor. At his breast dangled an eye-glass by a delicate guard, but it was plain that Mr. Waring did not require its assistance. The bright eyes roving in every direction, as though ever on the lookout for something, were evidently competent to discern whatever was to be seen.

"What news, my dear Mr. Waring?" said the smiling old Colonel, caressing his side whiskers. "Can you tell me who is to be Secretary of State, and a few other items? But I see that is not possible: conversation is out of the question. Come soon and spend the evening with us; you gentlemen of the press are the best company in the world! —How do you do, my dear Baron. I trust the Baroness is here. Mrs. Delancy would be too disappointed! —My dear child; what a pleasure! I was sure you would not forget your old admirer. Your hair is exquisite! —the exact shade of your mother's, and you know she has the most beautiful hair in the world."

The Colonel drifted on with a smile and compliment for everybody. He had informed Mr. Waring that he would find Mrs. Delancy in the next room, and the journalist proceeded in that direction, looking curiously at the crowd around him.

"There's Seminoff, that Russian, graduated in all the rascalities of Paris," he muttered. "He's come to see Louise, and she doesn't wish to see him in the least. And there's Tom Winter, the individual she does wish to see; a spoony youth, with a *boutonnière*. I'll accost the young man. I like spoony people!"

But Mr. Waring counted without the crowd, which carried him forward as on the crest of an immense wave, to the side of Mrs. Delancy — an elegant woman of about fifty. In response to his low bow she held out her hand, and said in her cordial voice, "I was certain you would come to-night, Mr. Waring. I wish you would give us the pleasure of seeing you more frequently."

Mr. Waring bowed again. There was always something charming to him in the gracious voice of this beautiful woman. She looked past him as she spoke, and returned the salute of some one behind him — the modest youth of the *boutonnière*, who came up and pressed the hand she gave him, blushing as he did so. Then this youth glided away, reached the side of a little blond beauty of about eighteen, clad in white, and whispered as he bent down, —

"You are looking like an angel to-night, Louise!"

The angel blushed and smiled; and Mr. Waring, who had observed the whole pantomime, smiled too, and muttered, —

"Well, Tom Winter, my son, you and Louise Delancy are perfectly happy now. All this Vanity Fair here has vanished as you are looking at each other! Spoony about a girl! What moonshine youths will feed on! You are alone with your diva — no, by Jove! there's that fellow Seminoff going like a tiger-cat to break it all up!"

Mr. Waring sighed, and strolled in the direction of the refreshment room, whence, after restoring exhausted nature, he came back to the hall. Some evergreens had been woven into bowers here and there, in the alcoves; and in one of these Colonel Delancy was seated, conversing with a superbly dressed woman — a person of middle age, covered with diamonds.

"I should like to listen to what these old parties are saying," philosophized Mr. Waring. "Madame Ordmore is flirting with that old man of the world, to keep her hand in. What eyes! they outshine her tiara!"

It was not a flirtation which was going on between Colonel Delancy and his companion. This lady was the mother of Louise, who had been adopted by the Delancys. She was the widow of the Colonel's brother, and now the wife of the Honorable Mr. Ordmore, millionnaire.

"I really must take the dear child home," the lady said. "She is old enough to marry, and

Prince Seminoff is an excellent *parti*. He is dying to make Louise a princess."

The old Colonel looked gloomy for the first time during the evening.

"Who is Prince Seminoff, my dear Mrs. Ordmore?" he said.

"A prince of the Romanoff blood, and immensely wealthy. The match would be superb."

"I can't give up Louise," the old Colonel said, looking unutterable depression. "You know we have no children, and it would break our hearts to part with her."

The lady seemed not at all impressed by these words. She said, with a little hauteur, —

"Mrs. Delancy forgets that I am Louise's mother. She has not taken very great pains to impress the fact on my daughter!"

All at once Mrs. Delancy came up to the alcove. The evergreens concealed Mrs. Ordmore until she had reached the spot. At sight of the lady, Mrs. Delancy colored, and curtseyed stiffly.

"The Russian Minister was asking for you a moment since, Colonel Delancey," she said. She then made a second bow to the Colonel's companion and swept away. It was wonderful to see how chill the gracious face and manner had suddenly grown.

Mrs. Ordmore colored from her forehead to her *bouquet de corsage*.

"That is charming! really charming!" she exclaimed, with intensified anger. The Colonel shrunk down; the storm was about to burst.

"So this is to be my reception in your house, Colonel Delancy! I am to be insulted in the grossest manner! Mrs. Delancy is not content with staying away from my receptions: when I visit her she freezes me with her airs of a duchess!"

"My dear Mrs. Ordmore, you quite mistake —"

"I do not mistake at all! My presence is not agreeable to Mrs. Delancy. I will not intrude myself further."

The Colonel in vain protested. The lady had given full rein now to her indignation.

"No, indeed, sir!" she exclaimed, rising. "It is *too* plain, and I will not endure it! My daughter shall not remain in a house where she is taught to despise her own mother! Will you be kind enough to order my carriage, Colonel Delancy? Here is Mr. Ordmore."

Colonel Delancy groaned, and rose with a desperate air. All his smiles had vanished, and he seemed to have lost the last friend he had in the world. In a dazed manner he shook hands with the portly personage who approached — the Honorable Mr. Ordmore, who had a ruddy face, a large wart on his nose, and the air of a man who had untold millions invested in government four-per-cents.

"Well, Delancy," grunted the Honorable Mr. Ordmore in a wheezy voice, as he waddled up, "having a private interview with my wife, eh? Well, help yourself. She's old enough to manage her own affairs."

The Colonel muttered something, but Mrs. Ordmore interrupted it by saying coldly, —

"I have a headache, and wish to go home; please order my carriage. I will come to-morrow or next week for Louise," she added, as she swept by Colonel Delancy.

Mr. Waring had caught a part of this conversation against his will. He passed on quickly, as though ashamed of having done so, and muttered as he went, —

"There's something unfortunate for Tom Winter and little Miss Louise under all this. I'm sorry; I wish I could help them, or at least wring that rascal Seminoff's neck, yonder. He is smiling from the teeth outward, and a lynx or hyena would be ashamed of the resemblance!"

Ten minutes afterwards Mrs. Ordmore and the Honorable Mr. Ordmore had disappeared from the Delancy mansion, and the Colonel was looking after them with the air of a human being who has just heard his death-warrant. Mr. Waring, newspaper man, understood all, and was much depressed; and going up to him, held out his hand to bid him good-night.

"Must you go?" the Colonel muttered drearily. He had no heart even for his duties of host. They shook hands, and after informing Mrs. Delancy that he had spent a delightful evening, Mr. Waring donned his light wrap and went away, smoking a cigar.

"Well," he muttered, half aloud, as he walked along the avenue, "who says there's not something to see everywhere in this miserable world? Madame

Ordmore is outraged because Madame Delancy don't precisely approve of her, and is going to take Louise away and marry her to that rascal Seminoff. So Tom and little Louise are to be wretched, to say nothing of the Colonel; and Madame Ordmore is raging, and the Honorable Ordmore is rattling his gold, and Vanity Fair is in full blast, with the booths all flaming. Will poor little Louise ever marry Tom? It is really disgraceful. This furious *madame la mère* is in favor of her friend the Prince, and sooner or later that little rosebud will be sacrificed. What a world! I think I would like to take the whole concern and sink it to perdition! But, then, there'd be no last items at the moment of going to press, and the respectable fraternity of special correspondents would starve to death."

He walked on, swinging his whalebone cane in his neatly gloved hand; and, looking from side to side, a light in the window of a house standing somewhat back from the avenue caught his eye.

"There is Armyn," he said. "I'll drop in and see him, if for a minute only."

CHAPTER II.

A NEWSPAPER MAN AND A RECLUSE.

MR. WARING rang, and was shown in by an old black servant with gray hair, who bowed deferentially. The visitor was evidently a friend.

In a library to the right of the entrance, a cheerful apartment with a Turkey carpet, well-filled bookshelves, a walnut writing-table and a number of easy-chairs, a man was seated in front of an open fire reading a magazine. As Mr. Waring came in he rose to his feet, and stood in the full light of the argand lamp. He was about forty, of middle height, erect in carriage, with a bronzed complexion probably the result of residence in tropical countries, and an air of composure. The face was of the pronounced American type, with clear-cut and resolute features: at the appearance of Mr. Waring it was lit up by a bright smile.

"My dear Waring!" he said, coming forward quickly and grasping the hand of the journalist; "of all people in the world you are the most welcome."

Mr. Waring sat down.

"Well, that's gratifying," he said, "if one could only believe you diplomatic people. The trouble is to be certain whether you mean what you say."

"I am not a diplomatic person in any sense of the term, my dear Waring," said his host.

But Mr. Waring evidently declined placing any credit in this statement. Shaking his head, he replied, —

"If there is anything I am certain of — and few things are certain in this world of deception — it is that his Excellency Colonel Armyn is here on — well, let us say *a mission*. That is a glittering generality which saves trouble."

His host laughed, and said quietly, —

"See the result of being a journalist. You suspect everybody around you, and fancy the whole world is busy with plots, intrigues, secret missions — "

"*Halte là!* You have found the word!" said Mr. Waring. "That describes a friend of mine exactly. Do you suppose you can deceive me — a gentleman of the Associated Press? That your secret mission here — observe I emphasize the term *secret* — has escaped a special correspondent of the New York Boomerang? All around you betrays you. What is that upon the table? A cipher despatch! — good heavens!"

"At your service," said Armyn, smiling.

"What is it?"

"I decline responding."

"Well, that's what I call friendly! I came here, like Swiveller, with my bosom expanded and my feelings in a glow, and meet the same hollow mockery as at Mrs. Delancy's."

"Have you been to Mrs. Delancy's? A charming person."

"None more so; and her reception to-night was altogether a dazzling affair. Everybody there, old and young, rich and poor, — among the rich the Honorable Ordmore and spouse, — Duke and Duchess of Bonanza. But the topic is stupid. What were you reading?"

"I was glancing at that magazine. I read a good deal of light literature — it is a rest; rarely novels."

"No novels! the novels of the day!" exclaimed Mr. Waring. "My dear fellow, are you aware what you are missing?"

"What am I missing?"

"The dissection of souls, the analysis of the human heart," said Mr. Waring succinctly.

"Is that amusing?"

"No, not exactly amusing — that is out of fashion. But you see, you — analyze; and have the joy of reflecting that you have witnessed — dissection."

"You should write a novel yourself, my dear Waring. You are a journalist, and the best literary talent of the nineteenth century goes into journalism. You might venture, I think, to make your novel a little amusing."

"I should carefully avoid doing so — dissection is the thing. What you want is a human soul and a mystery."

"It seems to me rather an unfortunate theory if you mean to delineate contemporary society. There is very little soul, and even less mystery. Men all

wear wide-awakes and travel by railway — everybody resembles everybody else."

"Ah! you see you don't penetrate beneath the surface and — dissect," said Mr. Waring. "I behold mystery and mysterious people all around me. For instance, there is yourself."

"I?"

"Certainly — you are an enigma, a sphynx, a perfect safety-lock. I mean to find out your combination."

"And open your fancied lock?"

"Precisely."

"It would not be worth the trouble. I am only an ordinary citizen of the nineteenth century — a humdrum personage living a life of routine in the streets, or here at home reading by gaslight — until Mr. Edison is obliging enough to give us the electric light."

Mr. Waring shook his head.

"There are some things and people no fellow can find out, and you are one of them; but I'll end by finding the key to you and writing you up."

"That is something like a challenge!"

"It is," said Mr. Waring.

"Very well, I accept it; and from this moment shall wrap myself in your dear mystery. Find the key to my lock — pluck out the heart of my mystery — I defy you! — Now tell me the news."

"No, I never talk shop — there is none. Yes, there is. Fanchette has come."

"Who is Fanchette?"

"She's an angel — no, she's an actress. She plays 'Fanchette' with a *diablerie* that is really indescribable — she's a genius. Come and see her: she is acting at this moment."

"No, I thank you; I take no interest in the theatre, but I should enjoy a walk with you. I have been cooped up here all day."

"Come and walk, then. I wish I could afford to coop myself up and write my book. I am certain I should produce the great American novel and become a millionnaire."

"You would not be happier. Money is of all earthly things the most unimportant."

"It's devilish inconvenient to be without it. But, like you, I cherish a lofty indifference to dollars. I make a few thousands a year as a newspaper man, and am proud of it. I live at the centre of intelligence, am one of the pivots of society, smoke a good cigar, have a splendid digestion, and am perfectly indifferent who will be nominated at the National Convention."

"You are fortunate."

"And my book, you know, will make me famous. You shall be the hero."

"I defy you to make a hero of me. Shall we go?"

"Ready."

They went out into the avenue.

"The only obstacle to making you my hero," said Mr. Waring, as they walked on, "is the mystery about your absence during the last ten years or more."

"The *mystery?* that absurd phrase again, dear Waring. You really pique me and tempt me to *make* a mystery!"

"Where have you been?"

"I have been travelling."

"Where, to Paris, Rome — perhaps my favorite region of the bright Orient?"

"I have visited the East."

"I was certain of it — the land of the Arabian Nights!"

"Of railways and hotels and the telegraph. They will soon have the telephone."

"You seek to dissipate all my dreams of romance! You are the great disillusionizer! What does that cipher despatch I saw mean?"

"It means — business!" said Armyn, laughing. "Pick my lock, if you fancy there is a lock."

"I will do so. Here is the theatre. Come and see Fanchette for a quarter of an hour at least. As the friend of a newspaper man, you will find the best seat in the house at your disposal."

Armyn consented, and they went into the theatre.

CHAPTER III.

FANCHETTE IN "FANCHETTE."

THE parquette, dress circle, gallery, every part of the brilliantly illuminated building, overflowed with spectators assembled to witness the performance heralded on the play-bills as "Fanchette," by Fanchette.

It was one of those pieces of the modern stage which mingle comedy and spectacle. When the two friends entered, the performance was about half over, and the curtain rose on a scene in the Vosges, with a cataract in the background. Some peasants in wooden shoes and picturesque costumes came in and conversed. Then some notes from the orchestra blew Fanchette upon the stage.

She was about seventeen. Her figure was slim but not at all angular — very far from it. It was lithe, and assumed every instant a new outline, and she danced to and fro on her small rosetted feet like an elf, half enveloped in the curls of her long hair. It was extraordinary hair, of a rich straw-color, gathered behind the neck by a broad blue ribband, and so long and full that the mass of curls fell down and made a background to the slenderest

waist that the eye of mortal ever rested on. Fanchette's face was so mobile, and passed rapidly through such a variety of expressions, that it was difficult to form an exact impression of it. Looking at it in the chance intervals of repose, which were brief indeed, one could see that it was charming. The outline was oval, the nose straight, the chin round, the eyes black, and the lips red and full of mischief. The contrast of the great black eyes with the straw-colored hair was remarkable, and the eyes themselves as remarkable. They melted and fired, from moment to moment, and were full of a strange charm.

"A curious-looking girl, isn't she?" Waring said to Armyn, as Fanchette proceeded to deploy her fascinations for the benefit of her lover in *sabots*.

Armyn did not answer at once. He was looking fixedly at Fanchette.

"Very curious," he said at length, in a low voice.

"She is the best girl I know — and a perfect little devil!"

"You know her?"

"Perfectly well," said Waring. "I have been acquainted with her for years — since the time when she went on the stage."

"She seems very young."

"She is seventeen, I believe. She told me last year she was sixteen, I think. I was introduced to her by her business manager, a very fine old fellow, when she was a child; and as I liked her freshness and spirit of mischief, I took a great fancy to her.

I said so many fine things about her in the newspapers that she quite fell in love with me. She is over that now, but honors me with her regard. Look! she has seen me and is smiling at me — the little rascal! Did you ever see blacker eyes or redder lips? — How do you do, Fanchette?"

As he said "How do you do, Fanchette," Mr. Waring looked at her, moving his head slightly Fanchette made him an almost imperceptible bow in return, and looked radiant.

"Now she's going to torment that poor Jean or André in sabots worse than ever!" said Mr. Waring, laughing. "She says she always acts twice as well when I am in the audience — which is flattering."

This did not seem to be a mere boast on Mr. Waring's part. Fanchette appeared to be possessed by the very spirit of mischief and *diablerie*. She flitted about her admirer in the sabots with the air of an elf. Her feet in white stockings and rosetted slippers seemed scarcely to touch the ground; and her straw-colored curls resembled a golden nimbus as they floated back from her slender waist. In her whole performance there was the charm of youth and freshness. She was perfectly maidenly in every movement, and seemed acting her own character instead of a part.

"She is charming, is she not?" Waring said with a laugh. "Now she is going to dart off to the cataract yonder, and leap from the canvas precipice to the ditto opposite. The owner of the sabots is go-

ing to rush after his sweetheart, and Fanchette will disappear, waving her handsome arms in the foam of the impossible cataract; — see my last notice."

Mr. Waring was evidently familiar with the performance. Fanchette darted up the path, with her admirer in pursuit, but eluded him. A moment afterwards she waved her white arms, and leaping the chasm, disappeared with a burst of elfin laughter.

"Good! don't you think so? Why, Armyn, you look unwell!" Waring exclaimed. "You haven't the least color!"

"I am not unwell."

"You know Fanchette!"

"Know her? I never saw her in my life before."

"Well, that's strange! You say you never saw her before? What does it mean?"

"I have never even heard of her, though I may have seen her name in the newspapers. A stage name, I suppose."

"I think so," said Waring, looking curiously at his companion. Either he saw no trace of emotion in Armyn now, or chose not to notice it. "I never asked Fanchette about herself, as she did not introduce the subject."

"I recognize you in that. There never was a man of better breeding than yourself."

"Oh, bother! There's no question of breeding. Fanchette's a lady. You can't say to a young lady in society, 'Have you any right to the name you bear?'"

"And this young girl is — a lady, you say?"

"A perfect lady, and in every way irreproachable. She is not only that, but the warmest-hearted girl I know. She constantly acts for the benefit of charities, and has close friends among the best people. My friend Mrs. Delancy is very much attached to her."

"I am very glad to hear it — I might have known it. You are not the man to make a *friend* of a different sort of person."

"Well, I'm not. It may detract from the rounded and perfect outline of my character as a man of fashion, but — I'm not."

"I was sure of it. Men like yourself do not soil themselves with wandering loves. You are a *flaneur*, my dear Waring, but under the trifler is the honest gentleman."

Waring bowed, and said, —

"Recognition from so high a source is grateful to one's feelings. But there's nothing like love between Fanchette and myself. She's one of my best friends — and one of the finest girls I know. A great deal finer than many a man meets in society. All I have against her is that she's a woman and a diabolical little chatterbox. But that's not her fault. Poor thing, she can't help it."

"You are not a great admirer of women, it seems."

"An admirer? I detest them!"

"And are constantly in their society."

"It is necessary to frequent their haunts in order to study them — for my book, you see."

"And you do not intend to marry?"

"To marry? I would rather cut my throat, my dear Armyn. If the idea entered my head, I think I'd try Fanchette. I might do worse if I was a marrying man, which I'm not. But then Fanchette's *such* a chatterbox, and so diabolically mischievous."

"Mischievous?"

"She's all quicksilver and champagne, with the bubble on it! all smiles and tears, and sighs and laughter, and that sort of thing. There never was such a girl! If I were to fall in love with her she would lead me a terrible dance. The result would be tragic. Her love of fun would make her break my heart — and then she'd break her own because she had broken mine."

"You describe a character full of contrasts: our society must be attractive," said Armyn; "and now, dear Waring, shall we continue our walk?"

"Are you tired of Fanchette?"

"Remember I am not as much interested in her as you are."

"I don't know that!" muttered Waring. He imagined that he had discovered that Armyn was keeping guard over his face and his voice. "Well, we'll go then."

But suddenly the curtain rose, and Fanchette alighted like a bird in the middle of the stage. It was Fanchette spiritualized into a Lorelay of the Rhine. Had her foot slipped on the rocks of the cataract and the water borne her away — and had

she now returned to earth from the green sea caverns under the brine, to dance and flit and laugh her wild laugh, and tease her admirers a thousand times more than before? It seemed so. She made her sudden appearance in a woodland path in front of her lover. He was returning like a virtuous rustic to his home, with an axe on his shoulder. Clump! clump! went the sabots; his head was bowed down in sorrow — suddenly there before him was Fanchette.

Her dress was green from head to foot. A wreath of green sea-weed encircled her lithe waist and white neck, and the straw-colored curls fell like a glory around the rosy face. She had discarded the slippers, and wore flesh-colored stockinet on her small feet, seen beneath the skirt which came to her instep. Her arms were bare to the shoulder and adorned with shell bracelets. She was a water-nymph — the Lorelay of the Germanic legend.

"Did you ever see a figure as airy?" said Mr. Waring. "I am trying to make up my mind if her feet touch the stage. You really ought to know Fanchette, my dear Armyn. Hear her laugh! — and the curious thing is, it is her natural laugh. Come, let me present you."

"Present me?"

"Certainly: as a friend of mine."

"Thank you," said Armyn quietly, "I am not ambitious of figuring among the gilded youth in Miss Fanchette's salon."

"The gilded youth? You won't find any. They

are not Fanchette's style, and fight shy of her, I can tell you. She roasts them in an awful manner, and makes them feel uncomfortable. In a word, they are afraid of her — but you need not be. She would treat you with the profoundest respect, as I should introduce you! Look at the little wretch! How can you resist?"

Fanchette, in fact, was driving Wooden-shoes to sheer desperation. She hung around him with bewitching smiles, flitted away when he held out his arms; and at the very moment when he thought that she was clasped in his embrace, darted up the steep rock, and hovered above the cataract. The scene was as picturesque as the glare of stage-light could make it. The moon had risen, and soared through black clouds; the thunder muttered; the crimson light streamed on the cataract audibly descending in the background — and Fanchette hovered on the summit holding out her arms. As she laughed and beckoned, quick flashes of the most brilliant lightning lit up her figure, — her green dress, her white arms, her flowing hair and audacious smile. Her lover was overcome. He was very much frightened, but more in love. He rushed up the rock. His arms were extended to clasp the maiden. Suddenly Fanchette rose through the spray of the cataract, her feet crossed, her arms held out, a celestial smile upon her lips, and slowly disappeared in the spray-cloud and the moonlight. As she vanished, a dazzling flash illuminated the whole stage; the thunder roared like a battery; the or-

chestra answered it, and the curtain slowly descended in the midst of applause.

Five minutes afterwards the friends were in the street, returning in the direction of Armyn's home.

"How do you like her? — I mean Fanchette?" said Waring.

"I think her face is a very striking one."

"Strictly non-committal! It is striking, and the piece excellent, — particularly the last part. And Papa Melville always sees that she is well supported."

"Who is he?"

"He is the old fellow I spoke of — her business agent, not her father, though she calls him Papa Melville. Fanchette travels with him and her French maid. I think they have been abroad. Come and call on her with me to-morrow."

"Thank you, I shall be engaged."

"In other words, you won't!"

"My dear Waring, you must not think me discourteous, but — you must excuse me."

"I will if you will tell me one thing — or I shall perish."

"What is it?"

"Why did the sight of Fanchette produce such an effect upon you? I know the question is low; but consider the agonies of ungratified curiosity! It is torture."

"I will answer your question one of these days, I cannot to-night," said Armyn, quietly. "It is a very sad subject."

"Then you knew some one who resembled Fanchette? But you really must pardon this intrusion, my dear Armyn."

"It is not an intrusion. Nothing you could say to me would be an intrusion. I will tell you some day why the sight of this young lady produced a very painful impression upon me. There need be no mystery whatever on the subject. We shall have time enough. I hope we shall neither of us die soon, which would be a *bêtise*, as my friend De Lesseps said one day, speaking of his proposed canal through the isthmus. I shall not be long in this country. I have business abroad. Come and see me at home. I have a house on the bay."

"I will!" said Mr. Waring with energy; "nothing could please me better! Congress is at a deadlock, and nothing's in progress but booming. I shall interview a prominent official to-morrow, who has promised to tell me who the nominee will be. Then I'll get some friend in Newspaper Row to undertake my special letter. After that any day will suit me."

They were at Armyn's; and parting with his friend, Mr. Waring proceeded to the Row, where he remained up nearly all night, writing his special for the morning paper.

CHAPTER IV.

LOUISE.

IT was just twilight. The lamps in Mrs. Delancy's drawing-room had not yet been lit. The dusky apartment was only illumined by the cheerful glow of the fire, and the red light fell on the figures of Louise and Mrs. Delancy.

Louise was seated on a cricket at the lady's feet, and leaning upon her lap looked up into her face. It was a very pretty picture. Miss Louise Delancy was a charming blonde, with beautiful auburn hair and blue eyes. There was something mild and even shrinking, but firm too, in her expression, which indicated that she had a great deal of character. This is frequently the case with apparently timid people, especially with women, who are called the weaker vessels, and are often the stronger. Mrs. Delancy, in an elegant evening dress, was leaning forward and smoothing the young lady's hair. It was easy to see from the manner in which she did so, and the tender light in her eyes as she looked at Louise, that this good woman cherished the girl in her heart of hearts. She had, indeed, adopted the child almost in her infancy, after a very slight objection indeed on the part of her own mother, and the new

mother had quite taken the place of the old. They called each other "mama" and "daughter," and confided to each other their joys and sorrows. The latter seemed to enter into their present interview.

"My poor dear child, I was afraid it would come to this," Mrs. Delancy said, continuing to pass her hand softly over the auburn hair; "but don't think I blame you."

"I'm sure I never thought it wrong, mama," said Louise in a low voice. "We were brought up together, and — he loves me so, mama!"

"I know very well that he does; he is an excellent young man, but then — "

Mrs. Delancy stopped, sighing. Louise, looking down, said, —

"I know he is poor, but money is not everything. He has his clerkship — and papa is rich — and — my mother."

Mrs. Delancy shook her head.

"Money would not be the trouble, dear, with your papa." Colonel Delancy was "papa" to the girl as Mrs. Delancy was "mama."

"Your papa would much rather part with half his fortune than with you. He will not give you up to any one without a very hard struggle. I am sure he would not consent to your marriage with Prince Seminoff under any circumstances — if he could prevent it."

"I will never marry Prince Seminoff!" exclaimed Louise, almost haughtily. Her cheeks reddened and her lips contracted.

"Well, my poor darling, I don't think you will find it very hard to convince your papa that he is not a suitable person. Your great trouble will be to convince him that *anyone* is. He is quite wrapped up in you."

"And yet—"

Louise left the sentence unfinished.

"And yet he opposes your engagement to Mr. Winter—I am afraid he will continue to do so. But believe me, it is from pure disinclination to part with you. Mr. Winter and yourself are young, and have time to wait, dear. Do not be distressed. You know how much we love you. I have no child but you, and I pray heaven daily that I may be a good mother."

"You *are* a good mother!" Louise said, pressing the hand caressing her hair to her lips—"the only mother I ever had!"

"You must not think too hard of her. She was very poor when we took you, and could scarcely provide for you."

"She has forgotten me. She never sees me or seems to care for me!"

There was a secret anguish in the girl's voice as she uttered these words.

"She only thinks of marrying me to this Prince Seminoff, and I would rather be dead than marry him!"

"You must make allowances. No doubt she has your happiness at heart."

"She cannot, mama, if she wishes to make me unhappy."

"She has never treated you unkindly."

"She parted with me! A mother ought not to part with her baby!"

The supreme indictment was unanswerable. Mrs. Delancy could make no reply. She could only draw Louise to her and hold her head against her bosom.

"There, there, my darling, don't cry," she said; "things are not so bad. It is not probable that your mother will marry you to Prince Seminoff as long as you remain with us; and —"

"Remain with you! What do you mean, mama? Could anybody take me away from you?"

Mrs. Delancy drew the girl closer, preserving a sad silence

"Mama, what do you mean? I will never leave you! I never had any other mother — I am your daughter — don't let them take me!"

They clung to each other — these two poor distressed women.

"You are my only friend, mama — the only mother I have!"

"And you my only child!"

CHAPTER V.

TOM WINTER.

MR. WARING, newspaper man, was smoking a cigar in his comfortable bachelor lodgings, when the door opened and Mr. Tom Winter came in. Mr. Winter was a handsome young fellow, with a mild, rather sad expression, but a certain composure of manner which produced the impression that there was more under this modest exterior than you at first supposed. He was a great favorite with the journalist, who grasped his hand and said, —

"Well, here you are, my boy — what's the news?"

"Nothing," said Tom Winter, in a depressed voice; "and I didn't come to talk about news, Waring."

"I know that," said Mr. Waring, looking at him satirically. "You came to indulge in gush. I see it in your face."

Tom Winter smiled sadly, and blushed. He then sighed.

"What a groan!" Waring cried. "You're enough to make a man commit suicide. Tell me

all about her — of course there's a woman in it, and I'm pretty certain I know who she is."

"Of course you do. Don't laugh at me more than you can help, Waring."

"The temptation is too great. I always laugh at men who are spoony — what makes you crazy fellows lose your heads in this way?

> Gone, gone, your head is gone;
> You've no wits to spare.

I never saw the woman, and never expect to, whose eyes could bring me down."

Tom Winter sighed once more, and forlornly lit a cigar. Waring looked at him keenly, and said, —

"I never saw a man so miserable. What's up, Tom? This is too bad! I was revelling in the delights of a virtuous cigar when you came and put it out. The world was sunny, the future an expanse of brilliant calm, — when you arrive and give me a fit of the blues."

"Can't help it; I want your advice."

"I never give advice."

"You say you don't, but you always do. I never knew you to fail to help a fellow."

"Well, unbosom."

"I have seen Colonel Delancy."

"And asked him for somebody?"

"Yes," Tom Winter said hopelessly.

"You need not tell me his reply. I know what it was, from your voice."

Mr. Waring rose, and walked up and down, knitting his brows.

"Have you great expectations from a rich bachelor uncle?" he said.

"No."

"Friends in the administration?"

"A few."

"Well, secure an appointment. The great bonanza of the age is the national strong-box. Sell yourself for ducats — then you can marry your sweetheart."

Tom Winter shook his head with the same hopeless expression.

"Never saw a man in such a state of dilapidation!" exclaimed Mr. Waring. "You are a fraud, Tom Winter, besides being spoony! Do you mean to say that, poor as you are, you object to selling yourself?"

"It would be of no use — want of money is not the trouble," Tom Winter said, evidently declining to be cheered by his friend's gayety.

"I can understand that Colonel Delancy was too much of a gentleman to tell you so."

"He told me in so many words that it was no obstacle whatever — my prospects were good — had a high esteem, and all that — but there was a greater objection."

"What?"

"Parting with Louise. He could not give her up — and I think he was honest about it, Waring."

"I am perfectly sure he was. A gentleman like the Colonel always means what he says."

"I have not told you the worst."

"The worst?"

Tom Winter looked more unhappy than before, and said, —

"They are trying to marry Louise to Prince Semmoff. I mean, her mother means to do so if possible."

"I know it."

"Can she?"

"Yes."

Waring walked up and down, and concentrated his thoughts and eyebrows.

"It's a devilish crazy affair, altogether!" he muttered. "It would be a shame! And something ought to be done."

He stopped in front of his visitor, and said, —

"I tell you what, Tom; if you let me I will ask the advice of a friend of mine. He is the coolest head I know, and has succeeded in everything he ever attempted. May I? He is discreet, and you can trust him."

"Who is he?"

"His name is Armyn."

"I don't know him, but I have heard of him from Mrs. Delancy, who is acquainted with him. He can do nothing."

"Let me ascertain."

"As you choose."

Tom Winter sadly tossed his cigar in the grate, and put on his hat.

"I must go," he said; he stopped and added, thoughtfully, —

"I was thinking of one thing — but it is unreasonable. I would like to cut Prince Seminoff's throat."

"Don't do that," said Waring, laughing; "tragedy is out of fashion. The taste of the age is for comedy. No, no, Tom, be patient and hope for the best — there is nothing like looking on the bright side of things in this world. Go on loving Louise as much as you choose, and don't despair. You are in for it, my poor boy! The honey-poison has entered your system. You are intoxicated on this fine love-champagne, which is going to give you a headache. The best thing to do is to enjoy your inebriation as much as possible — before the headache!"

CHAPTER VI.

A BRACELET.

ONE good trait of Mr. Waring was, that he never forgot his friends, and having once promised to serve them, permitted nothing to interfere with the performance of his promise. On the next morning, accordingly, he went to see Armyn to consult him about Tom Winter's affairs. Why he should have thought of doing so, he could not understand — it certainly indicated a remarkable confidence in his friend's judgment.

As Waring went along swinging his whalebone and smoking as usual, he looked around him with interest. The city had been completely metamorphosed during the night. The winter had been extremely mild, but seemed about to make up for lost time. All through the hours of night a snow-storm had steadily descended, and now the capital was wrapped in its white mantle. The avenues rang with sleigh-bells; the sunlight flashed from roof and façade; the public buildings resembled temples of alabaster. A fresh wind was blowing the snow in drifts here and there, and bringing roses to the bright faces of ladies and children passing in their

sleighs. It was quite a brilliant spectacle, and Waring looked on with a slight feeling of envy. He would have liked to occupy a seat in a particular sleigh by a beauty in a sealskin sacque, and sighed at the reflection that the enjoyment was denied to him.

He found Armyn absorbed in a mass of papers, but he laid them aside at once, and met Waring with his cordial smile.

"I disturb you," said the journalist.

"Not in the least," replied Armyn; "one of the great pleasures of life is to have a friend come in and give one a good excuse for idling."

"Very well. There is nothing so wholesome as idling. I wish I could idle, I am often tempted; and I have been smitten to-day by another diabolical temptation. I have coveted my neighbor's sleigh, and his wife too — or it may have been his daughter. She had a sealskin sacque and gray furs — would I had been close to them."

"Do you like sleigh-riding? I have a sleigh and two very good horses," said Armyn. "If you wish I will order the sleigh — as usual, I long for fresh air."

Waring greeted this proposal with enthusiasm, and Armyn touched a bell and ordered the sleigh.

"That will take a quarter of an hour," Waring said. "I wish to consult you about something. You have the best head I know, Armyn, — put it to mine and get a friend, a fine fellow, out of a difficulty."

He then informed Armyn of the state of Tom Winter's affairs. Louise Delancy and the young man were provisionally engaged to be married. The only real obstacle was the opposition of Mrs. Ordmore, who was the mother of the young lady, and probably meant to marry her to Prince Seminoff. What was to be done? Could Armyn suggest anything, or interfere in any manner?

Armyn had listened in silence, but at the name of Ordmore, his brows contracted. Waring noticed that fact without understanding it in the least, but made no allusion to it; and having finished, awaited Armyn's reply. It came in a voice exceedingly unlike the habitual tone of his friend, mild and with an undertone of kindness, sometimes of sadness. It was difficult to believe that bitterness ever entered this serene breast or touched the composed lips. But when Armyn now spoke, his voice was bitter, almost harsh.

"I regret that I cannot advise your friend what course to pursue," he said. "As to having any personal intercourse with the Honorable Mr. Ordmore or his household, that is impossible in my case. I have no respect whatever for that person, and should probably tell him so. As to Prince Seminoff, there is no more to be said than that he is a Russian nobleman, — a member of the Nihilist society, I believe, — and what is called a gentleman adventurer. I know him very well. I should be sorry to have a member of my own family form an alliance with him. I can render your friend no

assistance. I can only say that, in my opinion, any connection between Miss Delancy and these Ordmores and Seminoffs will prove a misfortune. — There is the sleigh."

Waring had not interrupted Armyn. He had listened with some astonishment. What was the explanation of his friend's evident repugnance to the very name of Ordmore? He was near asking the question, but did not do so. Armyn's tones were so abrupt that they plainly concealed strong feeling; and under such circumstances this confirmed jester did not jest or intrude.

"Well," he said, as they came out and went toward the sleigh, which was a handsome one drawn by two fine bays, "I see Tom's affairs are in a bad way if these people are mixed up with them. I never see that Seminoff without desiring to tweak his nose. What horses, Armyn! I wish they were mine, — I would go and pick up a friend."

They got into the sleigh, and Armyn took the reins.

"Who is your friend?" he said, returning to his mild tone and manner; "you are welcome a thousand times."

"Her name is Fanchette. She is crazy about sleigh-riding, and never misses an opportunity."

"Well, go and drive her out," said Armyn smiling.

"There would be no room unless you got out, which would be out of the question. Do better — go and call on her."

Armyn shook his head.

"Why not? Are you a woman-hater?"

"No, indeed; but I rarely visit ladies."

"Which means that you are *indifferent* to the sweet ones, since your sentiment is not hostility. Come at least and see Fanchette again to-night. It's her last performance. She is going away to-morrow."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes. These fairies are birds of passage. Fanchette is going to the South — to meet the sunshine."

"I hope she will find it."

"You are coming to-night to have a last look at her?"

"I am afraid I shall not be able to do so."

"Well, you certainly are the hardest-headed fellow I know! Nothing makes any impression on you. You look as soft as wax, and you are real adamant. I had promised myself the pleasure of saying to Fanchette, 'Fanchette, let me present my friend Prince Armyn, on a visit from his principality in the Orient!'"

"You would be wrong: I am not a prince, and I have no principality."

"Come, go with me — I really want you to make the acquaintance of Fanchette."

"No, I thank you."

But the fates determined that Mr. Waring's wishes should be gratified. A sleigh behind them attempted to pass, and came into collision with their

own. The consequence was that it was nearly upset, and its occupants were landed in a neighboring snow-drift. As one was a young lady, Armyn leaped out to her assistance, and at the same moment Waring cried in triumph, —

"Miss Fanchette! allow me to present my friend Colonel Armyn!"

The young lady was in fact Miss Fanchette, and her companion was her excellent old manager, of whom Waring had spoken. Fanchette attempted a dignified bow, but the attempt was a failure. She was up to her knees in the snow; her hair had broken loose and was streaming on her shoulders; and apparently realizing the comedy of the whole scene, she laughed heartily. Armyn assisted her out of the drift, and the old manager floundered to his feet — after which he took off his hat and made a profound bow to the company in general.

"So you see me thrown into snow-drifts, and decline coming to my assistance, sir!" cried Fanchette to Waring.

"I was just rushing to rescue you, fairest Fanchette, when my friend anticipated me," said Mr. Waring.

"Very well," said the young lady, smiling, "I will forgive you if you come and say good-by. You know I am going to-morrow."

And bowing again to Armyn, Fanchette got into her sleigh with her companion and drove off.

"Now you'll be obliged to go," cried Waring to his friend. "Common courtesy requires that

you should call to-morrow and ascertain if mademoiselle has caught cold."

"I really don't see the necessity — I will commission *you* to do so."

"What a woman-hater! Say at once that you don't like my friend Fanchette."

"I know nothing about her, and neither like nor dislike her, my dear Waring. I am not the least bit of a woman-hater, but I have other things to occupy me besides the society of young ladies."

Armyn was about to re-enter his sleigh when a glittering object in the snow attracted his attention. As it lay close to the deep footprints made by Fanchette, it was evident that she had dropped it, and Armyn stooped down and picked it up. It was a bracelet, consisting of a broad band of plain gold, with a medallion probably containing a miniature. Armyn, looking at it with sudden attention, touched a spring and the case flew open. Then he closed it quickly, and examined the inside of the band. The name "Fanny" was cut there, and Waring, who was looking at him, saw him turn a little pale.

"Where did she get this? She must have dropped it!" he said in a low voice.

For a moment he continued to gaze at the bracelet with the greatest astonishment; and then raising his head observed that Waring had his eyes fixed upon him. There was no longer, however, the least trace of merriment in the expression of the journalist.

"Something moves you," he said, earnestly.

"Yes," replied Armyn, putting the bracelet in his pocket and getting into the sleigh. "I know this bracelet — it was once my property."

"Yours? I have seen it a hundred times on Fanchette's arm!"

Armyn made no reply, and they drove off. At last he said, —

"I will tell you the history of this trinket, my dear Waring, but not to-day — the recollections it suggests are extremely painful. How it ever came into the hands of this young lady, I have not the remotest idea. It is the wonder of wonders! I thought — but it is useless to speculate. I must see her to return her property. You will give me her address, and I will call to-morrow. Oh, yes, I must see her! It is strange — very strange! — but nothing is stranger than human life!"

CHAPTER VII.

ARMYN CALLS ON FANCHETTE.

IT was about eleven in the forenoon on the day after the sleighing incident, and Fanchette, who had just returned from rehearsal, was seated at the piano in the quiet parlor of her quiet hotel, idly amusing herself running her fingers over the keys. An open novel which she had been reading lay on the seat of an arm-chair. One of the morning papers, containing a friendly notice of herself, had fallen to the floor. Fanchette had only glanced at it. She detested the stage.

She was not at all like the Fanchette of the stage at this moment, but a commonplace young lady, in a neat morning dress, with a little edge of lace under her chin. Her open sleeves covered her arms to the wrists, and not so much as the point of her slipper was visible beneath her skirt. It seemed to be her protest against her stage costume. Her expression, it is true, remained unchanged. Waring had said that she laughed in public as she did in private, which was only another way of saying that she was natural. It was easy to see that Fanchette was mercurial. Her large black eyes were full of

life and enjoyment; but then there was an entire absence of the stage *abandon*. The term ladylike accurately summed up her whole appearance.

After a while she rose and went to the window, which looked out on the snow-covered avenue. Sleighs flashed to and fro, and Fanchette rather envied their occupants. She was probably thinking that it would be very pleasant to be a "young lady," with a papa and mama and brothers and sister to make up a family party. Then, no doubt, she remembered the sleighing incident of the day before, for she put her right hand on her left wrist and sighed deeply.

"I must have dropped it in the snow! I missed it when we got home," she said dolefully, "and I knew the clasp was worn! How foolish it was in me not to have it fixed!"

The door opened, and a servant brought in a card. Fanchette took it from the waiter and read on it simply, "Mr. Armyn." After hesitating a moment she said, "I will see Mr. Armyn," and in a few moments afterwards Armyn came in.

Fanchette made a slight movement of the head and sat down. Armyn bowed, and took an armchair facing her own. His manner was reserved and a little formal, Fanchette's simple and natural. He had possibly expected to find a volatile young comedienne in Fanchette; if so, he was disappointed — a fact which plainly gratified him. His grave face assumed an expression of friendly interest, and he said, —

"I have brought your bracelet, which you dropped in the snow, Miss Fanchette, when you were thrown from your sleigh. I am glad to restore it to you."

Fanchette rose from her seat and came up to him quickly. Her face glowed.

"I am *very* glad, sir!" she exclaimed, taking the bracelet. She then returned to her seat, and clasping it upon her wrist, looked at it with a delighted expression.

"I see that you value it," Armyn said; "it is probably a present from some one."

"It was my mother's," she replied, "and I am truly grateful to you for returning it to me. I have worn it since I was a baby. I was very much distressed at losing it, and quite mourned over it."

"Mourning does not suit your age," said Armyn, gently; the fresh voice seemed to please him — "or your character of 'Fanchette,' if you will allow me to say so."

"Oh, don't speak of the stage!" she said; "it is too wearisome to think of it."

"Do you dislike it?"

"Very much indeed. It was pleasant at first, but has become almost intolerable."

"Will you allow me to say that you seem very much disenchanted for a person so young?"

Armyn smiled as he spoke, and added, —

"I know it is a little unceremonious to allude to a young lady's age, but you do not appear to be more than —"

"I'm just seventeen," said Fanchette, seeing that her companion hesitated; "but it seems a century since I first began to act. I wish I could give it up."

"Why do you not?" said Armyn, with gentle courtesy. "I hold to some old-fashioned theories taught me when I was young. One of these theories is that the true sphere of woman is home."

"But women, or girls like myself, must do something, Mr. Armyn — very often they have no choice. If they are poor, they must earn their living."

"Let somebody earn it for them. Their place is in the household."

"But if they have no household — no home," said Fanchette, rather sadly. "I am sure it is very good in you to take such a chivalric view of us, Mr. Armyn — but others are not so gallant. A poor girl must work."

"I repeat — let others work for you; your parents or your husband."

"Do you mean me?" said Fanchette, laughing.

"If you choose."

"I have no parents."

"Then — your husband."

"Thank you, sir! I am not supplied with one, and have not the least desire to be. But, speaking seriously, I am sure you do not mean that I am to marry anybody in order to have a home. I should never do that — I would rather remain on the stage to the end of my days."

"I do not advise it. But you say that you dislike acting."

"I enjoy it sometimes — a little. I meet a great many good friends everywhere. They are very kind —"

"Mr. Waring is one of your friends?"

"Yes, indeed! I assure you I should not feel so much at my ease if you were not an old friend of Mr. Waring's. He has spoken of you."

"Spoken of me?"

"Recently — and, I think, once or twice before."

"Well, I am sure that what he said of me was friendly. He is an excellent person, very warm-hearted and very intellectual, too."

"Yes, indeed, he is. I have known him since I was a child, and he has always been as kind as possible to me. He says the most absurd things about me in the newspapers, though I tell him he must not. Dear old fellow! he thinks he is pleasing me. But then he means well, and I haven't the heart to scold him!"

Fanchette's fresh voice was full of laughter. The formality with which she had met Armyn on his entrance was plainly thawing. It was apparently opposed to her volatile nature, and the reserve of her first manner was giving place to the mirth natural to her. He looked at her quietly, but with attention. A close observer might have seen that he was subjecting her face and expressions to a rigid scrutiny.

"I can understand your friendship for Mr. Waring very well," he said. "If he has spoken in a friendly manner of myself, I can assure you that he

nas spoken even affectionately of you. He will no doubt call to see you before you leave the city."

"I am sure he will. He has never failed."

"You are going home?"

Fanchette shook her head.

"I have no home."

"I meant to say to your family."

"I have no family."

Fanchette's smiles had all left her; she looked down, moving the bracelet to and fro on her arm.

"I had a home once. It was near a little town in Western New York called Ithaca — but that was a long time ago."

"But your father, Mr. —"

"Papa Melville is not my father," she said. "My father and mother are both dead. They died before I knew them."

Armyn was looking at her intently.

"That is very sad," he said. "A young lady is unfortunate when she is thrown on the world without father or mother. But you have many friends — is not Mrs. Delancy one of them?"

"She is a very dear friend, and has been as sweet as she could be to me."

"She is a charming person, and her daughter also."

"Louise? Oh, yes! Louise is the dearest girl in the world. I saw them yesterday. But she is not Mrs. Delancy's daughter."

"Not her daughter?"

"Her mother is Mrs. Ordmore."

Had Armyn led the conversation designedly to the point where Fanchette would be brought to utter the name Ordmore? His eyes were fixed immovably upon her face.

"Ordmore?" he said, "who is Mrs. Ordmore?"

"She was Mrs. Delancy — her husband was Colonel Delancy's brother. She afterwards married Mr. Ordmore."

"Do you know her?"

"I have never seen her."

"Or — Mr. Ordmore?"

Fanchette wondered at the deep tone of Armyn's voice.

"I have never met Mr. Ordmore," she said.

Armyn bowed, and said, quietly, —

"The two families are not intimate, probably. Mrs. Delancy's society must be a pleasure, as you have lost your mother."

"It is a very great pleasure. She is very good. I fancy sometimes that my own mother must have been like her."

"You have no picture of her?"

Fanchette shook her head sadly.

"I have none at all. I would give a great deal to have one. I have papa."

"Your father? You have a picture of your father?"

"This is papa."

Fanchette touched the spring of the medallion and held up her arm, exhibiting the picture.

"This is a miniature of your father, then?" said Armyn, in a low voice. "It is a very young face, and a very bright and happy one."

Fanchette looked at it, and a sudden moisture came into her eyes. These quick changes of feeling were natural to her.

"It is a dear face — I have often cried over it," she said.

Armyn's brown cheeks colored, and he drew a long quiet breath.

"It is admirably painted — I suppose from the broad collar he was a sailor."

"I do not know," Fanchette said, bending over and looking at the picture. All at once she raised her eyes and looked at Armyn. They were so close that her straw-colored hair almost touched his cheek.

"Why, papa was — like you," she said, with a vague wonder in her eyes and voice.

"Like me?"

Armyn spoke in so low a tone that he could scarcely be heard.

"The image of you! You are older — but your face is the same. What a wonderful likeness!"

Before Armyn could reply, the door opened, and the tall form of Papa Melville advanced into the apartment. He made a grand bow, in which there was a great deal of old-world courtesy and cordiality, and expressed great pleasure at seeing Mr. Armyn. He then sat down and entered into courteous and prolonged conversation, and Armyn

understood that his interview with Fanchette was at an end. The restoration of the bracelet gave Mr. Melville a topic for elaborate comment, and the expression of his profound thanks; and then Armyn rose and took his leave. As he went out of the room he turned his head, and saw that Fanchette was looking at him with the same vague surprise. Then the door closed between them, and Armyn muttered, —

"There is no doubt of it. She is — her daughter."

CHAPTER VIII.

HER STORY.

ON the same evening Waring went to bid his friend Fanchette good-by.

This visit had another aim. Armyn had become a great puzzle to him. There certainly was some mysterious connection between him and Fanchette, for Armyn had unquestionably recognized her in the theatre, though he declared that he had never before seen her. Perhaps the young lady could tell him what that recognition meant; and the explanation possibly would throw light upon other matters connected with Armyn. What was his business at the capital? That was a great mystery. Armyn lived in seclusion, but was plainly engaged in affairs of importance, and was a man of large resources which he took pains not to parade. This was not in itself a surprising circumstance: such men are found in all great cities, pursuing their aims like other people. They are stock operators, lobbyists perhaps, with ends in view either political or financial, — it is their own business. But Armyn did not seem to have any connection with stocks or the lobby. What was he "plotting"? to view the subject in its romantic aspect.

Mr. Waring had very little to guide him in his enterprise, — that is to say, the discovery of his friend's secret, if there was any secret. He and Armyn had become acquainted during the war, and had soon grown to be intimate friends. Both were young and overflowing with high spirits at that time, — especially Armyn, who did not seem to have a care in the world. He was from Maryland, he said, and had been educated at the Virginia Military Institute, which had led him at the outbreak of the war to join the Southern forces. When Waring first made his acquaintance he was already a captain, and soon became a colonel, — fighting recklessly everywhere, and keeping his high spirits in the darkest hours of the dark struggle. Suddenly, however, this gayety disappeared. Young Colonel Armyn grew silent, moody, and passed whole hours brooding in his tent. The deepest melancholy took the place of his former high spirits, and in spite of Waring's attempts to ascertain its origin, Armyn would tell him nothing. He seemed to shrink from any allusion, even, to the subject of his depression, and at last his friend took no further notice of it, merely resolving not to meddle with what did not concern him.

The end of the war came, and the friends took leave of each other. Armyn returned to Maryland, and Waring to his home in Virginia. But the old plantation was dreary; and the young Virginian, following his bent, went to New York and embarked in journalism. Thence he repaired to the

capital as special correspondent of his journal, and one day, not very long before the opening of this narrative, met Armyn face to face on the Avenue. His friend was much changed: he had hardened into a silent man, but the old bright smile came to his face again as they shook hands. Waring stood holding his hand and looking at him. Where had he been? Armyn replied that he had been abroad for some years. "Where?" asked Waring; but Armyn only told him that he had been travelling in Europe; and his friend could extract nothing further from him.

Then Mr. Waring, journalist, took the "mystery" view of things. What was Armyn's business? Why had he remained so long in Europe? Then the scene at the theatre came to intensify the journalist's curiosity. What was the meaning of his friend's agitation upon seeing Fanchette? Last of all, there was the incident of the bracelet, which put the finishing touch to Mr. Waring's curiosity.

"My impression is," he muttered as he went to make his visit, "that I have read all this in some romance — say by Miss Braddon. Or have I dreamed it? I'll ask Fanchette what it all means. She may be able to tell me."

He reached the hotel, sent up his card, and Fanchette ran to meet him, holding out both hands. She wore a travelling dress, and her wonderful hair was in a braid under her hat.

"So you've come at last, sir! I thought you had forgotten me!"

She was holding his hand, and looking at him with the greatest affection.

"The idea of my forgetting you! The thing is not possible, my dear Fanchette. You see I cannot get to *Miss* Fanchette, though I ought to."

"If you dare!"

And Fanchette made him sit down by her side on a sofa.

"It would be absurd!" she said. "You call me Fanchette because you are fond of me; and as I am fond of you, I do not mean you to change my name."

Mr. Waring contemplated the fresh face with the thoughtful air of a philosopher.

"It really is extraordinary how much attached I am to you, Fanchette," he said.

"Why is it extraordinary?" she retorted in a caressing tone; "we are always fond of people who are fond of us; and you know you made an impression upon me at an early stage of my existence. You used to bring me sweet things, which showed your knowledge of the weaker vessels."

"Yes, I always flattered myself I understood them. But I really must try the 'Miss,' and become respectful. If we remain on such familiar terms something terrible might happen."

"Something terrible?"

"It always does. When a young thing with eyes like yours runs to a young man in the bloom of youth, like myself, with both hands held out, and such roses, the situation is dangerous. I'll end by falling in love with you."

"*In* love with me? Oh, please don't! *Love* me as much as you choose, but not *that!* I've no heart for anybody."

"You deceive yourself, my dear," said Mr. Waring, with an elderly air. "You have a heart of uncommon size, and some day you'll make somebody a present of it. But don't let us talk sentiment. Are you really going? How can I sustain existence?"

"Now *you* are talking sentiment! You will sustain it very well."

"It will be a drag. But we have no time to grow romantic. To come to business."

"Business?"

"Or romance after all — the wildest romance."

"What on earth do you mean?" cried Fanchette.

"I mean that you have had a visit from a mysterious stranger to-day. My friend Armyn came to see you."

Fanchette laughed heartily, and said, —

"Yes, he came this morning and brought me back my bracelet. I lost it in the snow, and was ready to cry my eyes out about it. I have offered a reward in the newspapers."

"You ought to have paid Armyn."

"I paid him with a smile, sir! That is the best pay from a girl to you creatures."

"You are right; except in the case of an old boy like myself, who doesn't mind you. But what do you think of Armyn? Did you like him?"

"I liked him very much."

"Has he a fresh and charming face — a winning smile and noble look, — like Charley Herbert for instance?"

"Pshaw! the very idea of comparing the two people; it is absurd! Mr. Herbert's not at all noble-looking. I can't bear such baby faces."

"What a tongue you have, Fanchette! I had supposed that you preferred baby faces, as you are only a big baby yourself. I understand you to say that my friend Armyn's face is not infantile."

"It certainly is not. It is a very strong face, and a very kind one too."

"Bravo! You have read the man. He is the best fellow I know: brave as steel, but as soft-hearted as a woman — softer."

"That is the way you always talk — I should like to box you, you bad fellow! How glad I am to see you!"

Fanchette laughed with the abandon of a child, and looked at Waring affectionately.

"You really are fascinating, Fanchette," he said. "I must marry you to some friend of mine. I think Armyn would fall in love with you if you gave him the opportunity. You have seen him before?"

"Seen him before? No, indeed. Why should you think so? I advise nobody to bestow their affections upon me — for I shan't respond."

"Girls always talk in that way, and never mean it. You are better than the rest, but that's not saying much for you. Chatter! chatter! But

about Armyn. He certainly recognized you that night at the theatre."

"Recognized me? I never saw him before. I remember noticing him as you were talking to him, when you had the audacity to bow to me before the whole audience."

"And you to return it, my dear. So you really never met him before?"

"Never."

Mr. Waring looked puzzled. There was no doubt at all as to his friend's emotion at sight of Fanchette. What had it meant? One of the most disagreeable of all things to Mr. Waring was to be mystified. Was Fanchette acting a part? He looked at her. Her eyes were perfectly frank, and it was impossible to attribute deceit, even from a spirit of mischief, to a face so fresh and sincere.

"Well," he said, "I took the fancy that perhaps you had met him. You must make a great many acquaintances in travelling about."

"More than I wish to. A plenty of persons annoy me, as I suppose they do other actresses. I wish I was not an actress! I do not see what right they have to send bouquets and cards and presents to me — I never accept them. I just send them away when they are brought to me, and that is the end of it. It makes me laugh sometimes, but it don't please me at all — I wish people would understand that!"

"You are right; but you ought to remember how fascinating you are in your 'Fanchette' cos-

tume! Your angelic golden hair is enough to turn the head of anybody — at least of the Charles Herbert tribe."

"My hair? Why, it's red!" exclaimed Fanchette with shrill laughter, turning round for him to look at it.

"You deceive yourself," said Mr Waring. "It is golden, or of the richest amber; I positively *won't* call it straw-colored."

"That is just what it is, you rude creature — but I don't care."

"I suppose Armyn has seen somebody with hair of the same color. You know people turn round in the street to look at you — you are so striking."

"Now you are laughing at me, sir!"

"I am not laughing at you in the least. You are a beauty, my dear Fanchette. But really now — honor bright — have you never met Armyn? He certainly recognized you."

"I assure you it is impossible."

"Have you a sister with golden hair!

"You mean straw-colored —I have no sisters or relations of any sort. I should certainly have told you."

Mr. Waring shook his head.

"You have never told me anything about yourself," he said.

"Because you never asked me. How was I to know that you cared to listen to me?"

"I cared a great deal, and will listen now if you will tell me, Fanchette."

"About myself? I will tell you anything in the world you wish me to."

"I wish to know your whole story, then, as you don't object to telling me — where you were born, and all about yourself. Some curiosity is mingled with my request, but I assure you that a great deal of affection too is at the bottom of it."

"I am sure of that," said Fanchette, earnestly. "My story is a very simple one. It is a little sad, but you asked me to tell you, and you shall hear it. I do not know who my mother and father were, except that mama's name was Fanny Maurice. When I first remember I was living near a little town in New York called Ithaca, with a very sweet old lady I called Aunty Williams. She was not my aunt, I afterwards found, or any relation to me. There had been a terrible railway accident near her house, and many persons were killed. Mama was among them, and I was found alive in her arms. I suppose papa was killed too, if he was with us. It must have been fearful."

Fanchette's eyes filled with tears, and she sobbed.

"That is sorrowful enough," Mr. Waring said; "but how did it happen that nothing was known of your mother? Her baggage ought to have told."

"It was burned. I forgot to say that the cars caught fire."

"A singular incident — but then such things happen every day. You say a Mrs. Williams took you, Fanchette? She must have been a good woman."

"She was the best old soul in the world, and as kind to me as a mother. As soon as I grew up to be a girl she told me all about myself, and gave me my ring and bracelet — mama had worn them."

"Your ring?"

"This is it. It has mama's name in it — Fanny Maurice."

Fanchette took from her finger a plain gold ring, apparently a wedding ring, and showed Waring the name engraved on the inside.

"It is the same as that on my bracelet — 'Fanny.'"

Fanchette unclasped the bracelet, and showed the name on that too. Then she touched the spring of the medallion, and said, —

"This must have been papa's picture."

Waring looked attentively at it, and said, suddenly, —

"Do you see no likeness to anybody in this face?"

"A very strong likeness — to your friend Mr. Armyn."

"It strikes you too, then, Fanchette?"

"I could not avoid seeing it. It certainly is remarkable."

"It is very remarkable indeed," muttered Waring; "and the worst of it is, I don't know what the deuce to make of it!"

Fanchette had not caught these words, and looked at Waring inquiringly.

"I say this is a singular resemblance," he said; "the face here is certainly Armyn's."

"It certainly is like; but I have often noticed these singular resemblances."

Waring nodded. If the explanation did not satisfy him he did not say so.

"And this is all you know of your father and mother?"

"I never heard anything more, and I suppose I never shall. I often think how strange it is to be thrown on the world in this manner. It has been a great distress to me not to know about papa and mama. Other girls have their home, and father and mother, and sisters and brothers; but I have not even a name."

"Poor dear Fanchette! but who gave you the name of Fanchette?"

"Papa Melville. He was an actor who came to the country for his health. Aunty Williams was poor, and took some boarders in the summer, and Papa Melville was one of them, and took a great fancy to me. When aunty died suddenly he was at the house, and as I had no home he took me away with him to New York. His wife was very good to me, but she died soon afterwards; and then Papa Melville, who was much distressed, went travelling, and at last I began to act with him — which he did not wish me to do."

"Good old fellow! Well, of all the strange stories, Fanchette! But is that all you have to tell me?"

"I do not know anything more. I was twelve or thirteen then, and soon afterwards we went to

England, and then we travelled on the Continent. I would like to go back to France. We have a little money — not much. Papa Melville gives it all to me, but I never can keep it."

"I know why you don't. Every beggar woman who comes along empties your pockets, you dear girl! I've seen them do it, over and over! But tell me another thing. Why is my friend Armyn so much interested in you?"

"Interested in me? How can he be? I never saw him until the other night."

"He is, whether you know it or not. Let me see your ring again."

Fanchette, who had put the ring back on her finger, took it off and gave it to him.

"Fanny Maurice! That is your name, then?"

"I suppose so — of course. It was mama's."

"That is unanswerable," Waring said, knitting his brows in great perplexity. "And you say you don't know why Armyn was so much struck with you? It is not the common interest felt by men in little beauties of the stage. Armyn is not that sort of person. There's something under all this, Fanchette!"

Fanchette looked bewildered.

"I am sure I do not understand you," she said.

"You positively never saw him before?"

"Indeed I never did."

"That is strange indeed."

"What can he care for a small body like me?"

"I don't know — but I will know. When are you coming back?"

"Coming back? In the spring, perhaps. You must certainly come and see me."

"Do you have to go to-night?"

"Yes: Papa Melville has his engagements arranged."

"Train South!" came in stentorian tones from the hall below. Waring looked at his watch.

"Time's up!" he muttered, in a tone of great disappointment, rising as he spoke.

"You will certainly come to see me as soon as I get back?"

"As certain as fate, Fanchette! I have another motive now, besides the charms of your society, to cultivate your acquaintance."

"What in the world do you mean?"

"To find out something! — and I mean to find it out."

He held out his hand, looking at her with an expression of great affection. "Don't forget me," he said.

"Indeed I won't! What an idea!"

The voice was delightfully fresh and sincere, and the bright black eyes beamed on him. He shook hands, laughing, and said, —

"If you were still thirteen I would kiss you as I did then when you were going away once! But you're much too big a girl now, — and I've another reason."

"What is that?" said Fanchette, looking at him with her mischievous eyes.

"I am afraid I shall fall in love with you if we

become too intimate! Then I know you like me better for not being so unceremonious. You laugh, but you do. Good-by, Fanchette — but really, I quite forgot!"

And he put his hand in his pocket.

"You've something for me?"

"Fie! you just said you did not like presents, miss!"

"I do from *you!*"

"There, that's a mere blind. You are all alike — the same deceiving creatures!"

"You have a very low opinion of women, sir — I would not have believed it!"

"You are all so mercenary —"

Waring laughed, keeping his hand in his pocket.

"Your beautiful eyes sparkle, I observe — either from curiosity or longing!"

"Absurd! — what have you brought me?" she said coaxingly.

"Something you are certain to like — exchange that tea-rose at your collar for it."

"Do you want it? Why didn't you ask for it?" she said, detaching it and giving it to him.

"Kiss it, poor thing! and tell it good-by — it will be sorry to leave you," said Waring.

Fanchette pressed the rose to her lips, and gave it to him, laughing.

"And now where is my present!"

Waring drew out a box of sugar-plums, and Fanchette's eyes glowed with delight.

"You dear old fellow!" she exclaimed. "How

did you know what would please me better than anything in the world?"

"I knew your weakness."

"And you wished to bring back old times! It was so good in you, and so delicate! You are so different from the rest!"

Fanchette looked at him out of her large black eyes with such frank pleasure and affection that Waring laughed, and exclaimed, —

"Don't, Fanchette! — I'm certain to make love to you, and there's no time before the train starts!"

"Train South!" came again from the stentor in the hall of the hotel.

"Good-by, Fanchette."

"Good-by; I am *so* glad you came!"

And with an affectionate pressure of the hand they parted.

CHAPTER IX.

FANCHETTE'S ROSE.

"SO you have been to see Fanchette?" said Waring.

"Yes, I called this morning," replied Armyn.

"An agreeable interview?"

"Very agreeable."

"She is a perfect little champagne-bubble!"

"She did not strike me in that light. She was very composed and ladylike."

Mr. Waring was seated in the library at Armyn's, conversing. It was about eleven at night. He had come with the resolute intention of making his friend tell him everything. But Armyn seemed thoughtful and uncommunicative.

"I'm throwing away time — not an item of any description," said the journalist; "and yet I have narrated my own interview with our mutual friend. I took her some sugar-plums and she gave me this rose. She wore it at her neck, and was obliging enough to kiss it to enhance its value."

He took the rose from his button-hole with the light laugh which made everybody like him.

"I will give it to Charley Herbert — it is a tea-rose, cream and pink, just the color of Fanchette's face. Or perhaps you'd like to have it?"

"Thank you, I believe I do not want it," said Armyn with a rather sad smile.

"You seem not to take the least interest in Fanchette."

"I take a very great interest, but shall probably never see her again — or know anything about her, since you did not receive my note."

"Your note?"

"I wrote to you begging you to ascertain everything from her own lips. I felt a natural delicacy in asking intrusive questions. The note was sent to your lodgings."

"I am sorry to say that I did not receive it, my dear Armyn. I am just from the Row, and have not been home since morning."

"I was sure it had not reached you."

"But no harm is done: I can tell you all about Fanchette."

Armyn turned his head quickly.

"All that Fanchette knows herself — she made no secret of anything."

Waring then related Fanchette's story of the railway accident, and all the incidents of her life afterwards. Armyn listened with deep attention, leaning forward in his chair and fixing his eyes upon the speaker. An expression of profound sadness indicated the effect produced upon him by Waring's narrative.

"Well, that is strange enough," he said in a low voice.

He raised his head, and added, with a sigh, —

"The picture in the medallion is my own portrait. I presented the bracelet to Fanchette's mother!"

His voice faltered, and an expression of great distress accompanied these words.

"It is a very sorrowful history, Waring — I have shrunk from speaking of it, but there is no reason why I should not tell you all about it if you wish to hear it."

Mr. Waring was unfortunate. A sharp ring at the door-bell was followed by the entrance of a visitor — a sallow personage of about forty, with a black mustache, smiling lips, and eyes which seemed to watch. This gentleman, who was dressed in the height of the fashion, was Prince Seminoff.

Armyn rose with an air of unmistakable dissatisfaction, and bowed stiffly.

"Mr. Waring, Prince Seminoff," he said as if under protest.

"I am acquainted with Mr. Waring," said the Prince, bowing politely, and speaking with a foreign accent.

He smiled and sat down — it was quite plain that he was not going away before Mr. Waring. A quarter of an hour afterwards the fact became, if possible, plainer. The journalist then rose with an internal groan and took his departure. Armyn went to the door with him.

"Come and see me to-morrow morning, my dear Waring," he said, exchanging a grasp of the hand with his friend. "What is deferred is not lost."

"I will come without fail. I should like to cut the throat of that northern barbarian — the remark is Tom Winter's, but I appropriate it."

"I wish you could rid me of him."

And the friends parted.

Prince Seminoff remained for more than an hour, conversing in Russian. At the end of that time he went away and Armyn closed the door upon him. His face exhibited a good deal of weariness and disgust, from which fact it was natural to conclude that the Prince was not a favorite with him.

As he came back into the library, something on the carpet caught his eye. It was Fanchette's rose, which Waring had twisted to and fro in his fingers, and absently dropped. Armyn picked it up, and stood for some moments looking at it. It was a tea-rose bud just opening, and seemed to produce a singular effect upon him. It is probable that his memory went back to a time when he had given some one a similar rose; for he said in a low voice,

"It is the same!"

His vague glance seemed to pass beyond and fix itself upon some figure of his memory. Then a groan burst from his lips.

"It is enough to break a man's heart!" he said.

As he spoke in a low voice, a burning tear rolled down his cheek. He was bending over, and the tear fell on the rose.

On the next morning, Waring hastened to Armyn's; but misfortune still pursued him. The old

servant handed him a note from Armyn. It contained the following words: —

"I am truly sorry, my dear Waring, not to meet you to-day. I am absolutely compelled to leave town in the early train. I shall not be absent long, and trust I shall see you on my return."

Whether Mr. Waring went away in a more charitable state of mind in reference to Prince Seminoff, is doubtful; it is probable that he did not. He certainly scowled; and his next special letter was savage to the degree of ferocity.

CHAPTER X.

THE HONORABLE MR. ORDMORE.

IT was about two o'clock in the morning. Mrs. Ordmore's superb reception was just over, and her company had taken their departure. In the grand drawing-room, which was as magnificent as great wealth and questionable taste could make it, the Honorable Mr. Ordmore, who had indulged in an excellent supper of terrapin and canvas-back, was reclining in an arm-chair and solacing himself with a mild cigar.

This Honorable Mr. Ordmore was a person of striking appearance. His frame was huge and overgrown with fat; his face ruddy, adorned with warts, and apoplectic; his eyes small and piercing; his mouth firm and imperious. As a private individual he might not have produced a very agreeable impression; as a millionnaire he was imposing. He had the air of a man to whom people took off their hats. This was natural. People take off their hats to a man who can draw his check for a million, and Mr. Ordmore could do so. He was the head of every great enterprise in every section of the country. When he grunted, stocks trembled. When

he made casual allusions to securities of any description, newspaper men standing near him pricked up their ears and took out their note-books. These allusions were infrequent. He did not talk much. He had the air of a man who takes nobody into his confidence. The very manner in which he smoked his cigar was private and confidential.

Mrs. Ordmore, in a superb Parisian toilet, was seated in an arm-chair facing his own. Her satin slipper patted the magnificent carpet in a peculiar manner, and the expression of her handsome face was quite in unison with this nervous movement.

"It really is *too* bad! It is not to be endured!" she exclaimed. Her voice was brief and harsh. It was quite plain that something unpleasant had occurred.

"What's the matter?"

Mr. Ordmore asked this question with an air of great indifference. His voice was wheezy, and produced the impression that he was much too rich to care much about trifles.

"I suppose you noticed who were here and who were not here this evening?" said the lady with an angry blush.

"I am not sure," said the Honorable Mr. Ordmore. "I was thinking of the canvas-backs. They were devilish good."

"Mrs. Delancy will not come to my receptions — she refuses to recognize us!"

"Well?" said Mr. Ordmore with great indifference.

"It is a gross insult."

"I don't see why."

"She looks upon us as new people. She holds her head above us and will not come to the house — everybody is speaking of it."

"Very well. I don't see how you can make her come if she don't choose to," said Mr. Ordmore.

"Nothing has any effect upon you, Mr. Ordmore! You have no self-respect!"

The Honorable Mr. Ordmore looked at the lady with his small bloodshot eyes, which glimmered through the cigar-smoke.

"Self-respect?" he grunted; "what have Delancy and his wife got to do with my self-respect? I don't depend on their opinion of me. Plenty of people respect me — or my money, which amounts to the same thing. You ought to have learned at your age that a man's position depends on his bank account. If Delancy and his wife don't come here, what do I care?"

The lady uttered a significant sound which was not very complimentary.

"I might have expected such a reply."

"Well, you've got what you expected, then," said the Honorable Mr. Ordmore. "I'm a self-made man, and I'm not ashamed of it. In fact, I'm rather proud of it. I made my own money. First I made it in the war by army contracts, and then in other ways; and I've kept it, and mean to keep it. I could buy out Delancy and the whole concern to-morrow. What do I care whether they come or don't come

to your receptions? They may come or stay away, and welcome."

It was customary with Mr. Ordmore to express himself frankly in these matrimonial discussions. He seemed to derive a certain pleasure from doing so.

"I could buy out Delancy and put him in my pocket to-morrow," he repeated. "He's well off, but I could put him in my waistcoat pocket."

"That is not the point, Mr. Ordmore. You think money is everything. I say Mrs. Delancy offers us a gross insult by refusing our invitations."

"And I say, let her refuse and be — welcome!" said Mr. Ordmore.

"I will not endure it!"

"I don't see how you can help it."

"I will take Louise away from them."

"Your daughter, eh? Well, I have no objection. There's plenty of room in this big house if she wants to come."

"She does not want to come. She is an ungrateful thing!"

"Then I wouldn't force her."

"I will make her!"

"Just as you choose. The fact is — I have mentioned it before — the house wants young people. A big house ought to have children. It's a devilish bore not to hear their feet pattering now and then."

It was a very singular speech coming from the fat millionnaire, and his small eyes seemed to be looking at something quite beyond Mrs. Ordmore

— something or somebody. That lady did not observe the expression, she was much too angry.

"I do not mean to have Louise brought up to despise her own mother. I will take her home."

"You will get into the newspapers. There are a set of fellows who are always on the look-out for such items. There will be a scandal, — I don't mind it myself, but you'd find it devilish disagreeable."

"I don't care. I will take her."

"Well, do as you please, I say. I make it a point never to oppose women. They are the very devil, and make things uncomfortable. Manage your own affairs — I don't interfere with you."

And the Honorable Mr. Ordmore smoked with an air of great indifference.

"By the bye," he said a moment afterwards, "that foreign fellow Prince Seminoff comes here a great deal. What does he come for?"

Mrs. Ordmore changed color slightly. Prince Seminoff had the reputation of being one of her admirers.

"I'm not jealous," said Mr. Ordmore with extreme coolness; "but what does he come for?"

"He comes to talk about Louise."

Mr. Ordmore grunted.

"Do you mean to marry the girl *to him?* Humph! These princes are not much. He'll never get any of *my* money, which I've no doubt he's after."

"He is wealthy and does not need it."

"Glad to hear it; but I won't take his word for

it. These foreign fellows are mostly adventurers, and just as often rascals."

"For shame, Mr. Ordmore! You distrust everybody."

"I distrust this sort. To be plain, I don't admire your friend the Prince — he never looks you in the face. Are you going to have him for your son-in-law? It's rather risky."

"I am going to take Louise away from that hateful Mrs. Delancy."

"Very well, I say. As the lady's not coming to your reception to-night is the trouble, suppose you go and have that out with her. She might explain it."

"I will!"

"Well, that's arranged. I am glad I have business which will prevent me from being present on the interesting occasion. I have no doubt the scene will be devilish rich!"

Having thus unburdened his mind, the Honorable Mr. Ordmore rose slowly. It was a difficult matter for him to heave up, so to say, his bulky person, but he at last succeeded.

"I won't be sorry if you have a scratching-match and it ends in your bringing little Louise home," he said; "I rather like her pretty face."

He threw his cigar in the fire. Then he went to an adjoining room, and unlocking a cellaret poured out some brandy, which he drank.

"A devilish good article," he muttered, relocking the cellaret. After this the Honorable Mr. Ord-

more waddled off to his bedroom, without returning to Mrs. Ordmore.

That lady rose after a moment, and walked up and down the fine apartment, biting her lips and frowning. She was evidently thinking of the affront put upon her by the absence of Mrs. Delancy and Louise. The presence of the smiling Colonel Delancy had not soothed her. As she reflected, her indignation seemed to become greater than before. She clenched her hand, which was brilliant with rings; and if poor Louise, who was sound asleep, had seen the expression of the lady's face at this moment, it would have affected the poor child like a nightmare.

"I will first go and demand an explanation of this outrage!"

The lady was growing more furious.

"And then I will take her away from them!"

She stopped suddenly. A sound as of some one falling heavily came from the room above. A startled look came to her face.

"Can that be Mr. Ordmore?" she exclaimed.

She hastened up-stairs. It was Mr. Ordmore. He had fallen down in a fit of apoplexy. He was lying on the floor with his eyes closed, breathing heavily.

A violent ringing of the bell summoned the servants. They hastened in and lifted the ponderous person of the millionnaire, and carried him to his bed. Ten minutes afterwards his family physician had arrived, and was administering restoratives. At last he opened his eyes.

"Fanny — is that you?" he said faintly, with a bewildered look.

Mrs. Ordmore was going to the bedside, when the doctor touched her arm.

"It would be better for Mr. Ordmore to be kept quiet, madam," he said. "Any excitement at this time will be prejudicial."

Mrs. Ordmore drew back, muttering, "Who is — Fanny?"

As to the Honorable Mr. Ordmore, he turned his head away from her, and seemed to fall at last into uneasy slumber.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. ORDMORE.

THREE days after this scene the Honorable Mr. Ordmore had so far recovered from his attack of apoplexy, that he was able to drive out and attend to business. His physician warned him that another attack would probably prove fatal, and urged him to observe a strict regimen. But on the very next day, the Honorable Mr. Ordmore gorged himself upon canvas-back, and wheezed worse than ever.

It was probably only a question of time when he would be obliged to relinquish his millions, and go away from his splendid mansion in a vehicle of a different shape from his fine coach. But in the mean time he seemed determined to enjoy himself.

Mrs. Ordmore was revolving her darling vengeance on the hateful Mrs. Delancy. To wound that lady was her chief aim in taking Louise away; but to marry her to Prince Seminoff was also a darling scheme. It is painful to make the statement, but Mrs. Ordmore cared very little for her daughter. This lady's career had been a very peculiar one. Her first husband, the brother of Colonel

Delancy, had become hopelessly involved, and at his death his widow was left with an only child. Colonel Delancy had promptly offered his sister-in-law a home in his own house; but after considering this proposal deliberately, the widow had declined it. She had a few resources, she said, and preferred not to be dependent. Then Colonel Delancy proposed to adopt the young Louise; and to this the lady, after a very faint objection, had consented. So Louise went in her babyhood to live with her uncle and aunt, who had no children of their own, and Mrs. Delancy, taking a modest mansion, proceeded to mourn for her husband.

It soon became plain that the handsome widow had mapped out a certain programme. There are a great many curious eyes fixed upon a person in her situation. People fond of discussing the affairs of their neighbors, made her the topic of their discourse. They told each other with smiles and in whispers that the widow was not inconsolable. She would not wear that unbecoming crêpe vail very long. It would disappear soon, and white collars would appear. Then the black would gradually fade away into a rich russet tint. The beautiful eyes would cease to be obscured by tears. Smiles would come at last and replace the sadness on the red lips.

This gossip was very ill-natured, but the event proved that it was well founded. Mrs. Delancy was very handsome — masculine admirers of beauty looked at her boldly as she passed by; and it was

plain that the admiration was not at all offensive to the sorrowing widow. Now and then she greeted it with a covert glance, which made the admirers go away and talk. The lady was probably aware of this, and did not object to it. She gradually substituted for her widow's weeds a more becoming toilet. Soon ribbands made their appearance, and she was a great deal at her mantua-maker's. Then it was known to all that the disconsolate beauty had dried her tears, since she entered society with dazzling smiles.

The fortunate possessor of rich goods naturally realizes his or her good fortune, and aims to dispose of them, if they are for sale, to the best advantage. Mrs. Delancy was beautiful: the white and red of her complexion were natural and superb; her eyes dazzled, her lips were like carnations. It was the realization, possibly, of these personal attractions which had rendered her so indifferent to having charge of little Louise. A widow with children, even with one child, is not the same as a widow with none. The charge is a clog, and embarrasses an ambitious person. And this lady was ambitious. She meant to become a queen of society, and seemed to have succeeded. She met and ended by taking the fancy of the Honorable Mr. Ordmore — one of the newly rich, but not an objectionable personage on that account. People said that the Honorable Mr. Ordmore had made his millions by very doubtful transactions — that his record as army contractor would not bear examination; but then there

were the millions, which was after all the essential point; and Mrs. Delancy had consented to become Mrs. Ordmore without a moment's hesitation.

She had thus achieved one of her ambitions. She lived in a superb mansion and had a superb equipage; but the "best society" looked sidewise at her. Certain persons began to smile when her name was uttered. She received attentions, it was said, which were really too marked. It was a little scandalous. Was the Honorable Mr. Ordmore aware how his wife was being talked about?

At last certain ladies began to forget that she was on their visiting lists. This was galling. She would have liked to demand an explanation, but that was a critical business. It was impossible to resent the neglect, except by her manner — until it came to the case of Mrs. Delancy.

Mrs. Delancy was the safety-valve. This delicate and sensitive lady had been much shocked by the gossip in connection with Mrs. Ordmore. She was not at all straitlaced, but she was a person of great refinement; and almost unconsciously, her manner toward her sister-in-law had grown a little chill. There had been no precise evidence of dislike, but the displeasure was obvious. Mrs. Ordmore continued to be invited uniformly to Mrs. Delancy's receptions; but, without being aware of the fact, the lady of the house was only formally polite. On the last occasion she had simply made Mrs. Ordmore a ceremonious bow. A few days afterwards she had failed to make her appearance at Mrs. Ordmore's reception.

Then the cup of this lady's indignation, filled to the brim, ran over. She would no longer endure such treatment. She would take her daughter away from this woman who had so grossly insulted her. And such was the height to which the fair Mrs. Ordmore's rage had surmounted, that as soon as her anxiety in reference to Mr. Ordmore was relieved, she ordered her carriage and went to have "an explanation" with Colonel and Mrs. Delancy.

It was a very painful scene. Mrs. Ordmore indulged in violent reproaches. She would not be insulted. She would not have the heart of her own daughter alienated from her. As a mother she had a right to the custody of her daughter, and she would no longer permit her to remain in a family which employed every means of poisoning her mind against her.

Mrs. Delancy met this outburst with calmness, but a look of deep distress. She had never poisoned the mind of Louise against her mother, she said. So far from doing so, she had often taken her part; and she made excuses for the few visits paid to her at long intervals. Then Colonel Delancy took the word, and endeavored to smooth things. He could not give up Louise — it would break his heart. This worthy old gentleman and cool man of the world humbled himself. What was he to do without Louise? All his sunshine would go away with her. She was the child of his only brother, and had become like his own. He was childless but for Louise — Louise must not be taken from him in his old age. He would not survive it.

It was all in vain. Mrs. Ordmore's mind was made up. So far from being melted by anything which Mrs. Delancy had said, she had construed even the guarded expressions of that lady as new insults. The very avoidance of any explanation of her coolness of manner and absence from the reception was a fresh outrage. Therefore Mrs. Ordmore requested in a freezing voice that Mrs. Delancy would send for her daughter.

Louise came, and walking slowly into the room confronted her mother. She was very pale, but her eyes did not fall before the angry glance of Mrs. Ordmore.

"You will come and live with me hereafter," said the lady.

Louise bowed her head, and stood like a statue.

"Do you hear?" said Mrs. Ordmore, setting her white teeth together.

"Yes, ma'am," Louise said.

She was so pale that Mrs. Delancy ran toward her, thinking that she was about to fall. But Louise gently repulsed her.

"Never mind, mama," she said, "I am not going to faint, — don't be uneasy, mama."

She had twice used the word "mama" in one sentence. She had not used it yet in speaking to Mrs. Ordmore; and the fact either enraged that lady, or she affected to be enraged by it.

"This is your mother, then! You care nothing for *me!*" she exclaimed. "That will make no difference: you will be ready to come home to-morrow!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I will call for you. Understand me distinctly. I am your mother, whether you choose to consider me such or not, and I will be obeyed."

With these words Mrs. Ordmore rose from her seat, turned her back upon the group and swept out of the room. A moment afterwards her carriage was heard driving away.

Mrs. Delancy sank back in her seat, covering her eyes with her handkerchief and sobbing. Colonel Delancy groaned, and exclaimed, —

"Was there ever such a fury!"

He then went and put both arms around Louise and drew her to him.

"My poor, poor child!" he said, "what are we to do?"

Louise had not shed a single tear. Her lips were set closely together.

"I shall have to go, papa," she said; "but I promise you one thing."

"What do you mean, my child?"

"I will never marry Prince Seminoff. I will die first!"

CHAPTER XII.

A MATRIMONIAL COLLOQUY.

MRS. ORDMORE kept her word. On the very next day she drove to Colonel Delancy's, and remaining in her carraige, sent word that she had come for "Miss Delancy."

She was a very astute woman, this elegant Mrs. Ordmore, and did not anticipate any difficulty in recovering possession of her daughter. She knew that, from the moment when she demanded custody of the young lady, Colonel Delancy would be powerless to resist. He would not resist, since the only result would be legal process and a scandal. That would not change the result, since a mother is entitled to her child; and the event proved her good sense. Louise came out and entered the carriage without uttering a word. Her cheeks were wet with tears, and the sobs of two persons whom she had just left still rang in her ears. They were standing at the window of the drawing-room watching her, and through the glass she could see the tears on their faces.

"Where are your things?" said Mrs. Ordmore coldly.

"They are all packed, ma'am."

"I will send for them."

"Yes, ma'am."

She had not said "mama" once.

"Home," said Mrs. Ordmore to her coachman. And the carriage rolled away.

Three days after this scene the Honorable Mr. Ordmore was seated in his library after dinner, smoking his cigar. He seemed to have recovered completely from his attack, and his face was ruddier than ever. He was not in a very good humor, to judge from his expression. It may have been that the stock quotations in the evening paper which he was reading impressed him disagreeably; or that last slice of duck may have rested on his conscience. He certainly growled occasionally.

Mrs. Ordmore came in and took the seat facing him. She held a note in her hand, and said, —

"I came to show you this, Mr. Ordmore."

"What is it?" said Mr. Ordmore, looking up from his paper.

"A note from Prince Seminoff."

The Honorable Mr. Ordmore uttered a growl.

"What the devil have I to do with it?"

"It is proper that I should show it to you."

"Don't want to see it: read it if you choose."

Mrs. Ordmore read the note of Prince Seminoff to Mr. Ordmore. It was a very elegantly composed epistle, in which the writer requested the hand of Miss Louise Delancy in marriage.

"Well, what have you shown me that for — it is no affair of mine," grunted Mr. Ordmore. "I don't mind telling you my opinion of the whole matter if you wish to hear it."

"I should be glad to hear it, if you think it worth your while to inform me of it, Mr. Ordmore."

The lady spoke with a good deal of hauteur. It was her habit at times to adopt the grand air toward her parvenu husband.

"Well, I'll tell you plainly if you are anxious to know," he said. "The whole thing's an infernal shame. What are you going to marry Louise to that fellow for?"

"It is a suitable match, sir! You seem not to be aware that a mother has duties to perform toward her daughter."

"Devilish few, I should say, if I took *you* as an example. It strikes me that you have just waked up to a sense of your responsibility."

"That is offensive, sir!"

"Well, the truth often is. You start the topic, and I discuss it in a straightforward manner, as I discuss everything. If you are so anxious about your daughter, how has it happened that for twenty years nearly you have seldom seen her, and cared nothing about her?"

The tone of the speaker was certainly ill-bred. But then the question seemed to be fair. Mrs. Ordmore colored with anger; but long experience had shown her that she could accomplish nothing by means of anger with Mr. Ordmore.

"You know the circumstances," she said coldly. "My means were small, and I thought Louise would be better cared for at her uncle's."

"Very well."

"And that when I was better able I would take charge of her again."

"That's your affair."

"When I found that I was able to do so, and circumstances coincided with my anxiety for her future welfare —"

"All this is devilish long-winded, Mrs. Ordmore," said Mr. Ordmore; "if there is anything I hate it is longwindedness. Why don't you say that you set your cap at me and married me for my money? That's all right. I married you with my eyes open — it was a straightforward transaction. The only thing I don't quite understand is this: When you had a fine house why didn't you take your daughter home to it? As you're so anxious for her society, you might have enjoyed it before this."

Mrs. Ordmore knit her brows, which her maid had delicately pencilled that morning.

"If I had known that you were in so bad a humor I should not have intruded," she said spitefully. "It is nothing new to have you misunderstand me."

"I understand you pretty thoroughly," said Mr. Ordmore with candor. "You are a woman of fashion, and Mrs. Delancy has offended you. You take your revenge by claiming your daughter, and you are going to make her miserable by forcing her

into this match — to have people call your daughter Mrs. Prince Seminoff."

Mr. Ordmore meant "Madame la Princesse," but he was unacquainted with French. Although displaying his ignorance, his remark was perspicuous and intelligible — which is always something.

"Very well," Mrs. Ordmore retorted; "why am I to be blamed for wishing my daughter to become a princess?"

"The only trouble is, that, as far as I can see, little Louise would rather cut off her right hand than marry that fellow."

"She has been talking to you — trying to make a friend of you to oppose me! Girls are always fools. They never know what is best for them. They fly off into sentimental rhapsodies and talk about love in a cottage, and such stuff."

"*You* never did, Mrs. Ordmore. You preferred a brown-stone front."

"That is really too vulgar, sir! You will not listen to reason. Prince Seminoff is devoted to Louise, and will make her happy. She has formed some foolish attachment, which is the only trouble. She will forget it as soon as she finds what an agreeable thing it is to be a princess, and thank us for not yielding to her."

"I don't think she will."

"All girls do — it is their nature. She will have a grand wedding and a magnificent trousseau. The Prince will send to Russia for his family jewels. The occasion will be splendid, and Louise will read

a description of it in all the papers. Dresses and jewels have more effect than you suppose on girls."

"Do they? I don't believe Louise will ever be dazzled by Seminoff's jewels."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean that if he ever had any they are probably in pawn. I met Delancy to-day, and his opinion of Seminoff is the same as my own. If you are going to sacrifice your daughter it would be better to be sure you get your price. Nobody knows anything about this Seminoff."

"He is one of the Romanoffs."

"He may be. I am not acquainted with the family. I don't know anything about it, and I am tired of the subject."

"My society always seems to produce that impression upon you, sir."

"Well it does, now and then — to be plain."

"Very plain! What reply am I to send to Prince Seminoff's note?"

"What you choose. Settle the matter for yourself, I say. I have told you what I thought of the whole cursed business. You are sacrificing little Louise to your infernal love of show. It's a devilish low business, and I wash my hands of it. Do as you please, but let that fellow know that my money's my own. He'll never see a dollar of it."

Having delivered himself of these views in a wheezy voice, the Honorable Mr. Ordmore retired behind his newspaper, and Mrs. Ordmore, after glaring at the back of it, left the room.

Half an hour afterwards Prince Seminoff made his appearance, and kissed Mrs. Ordmore's hand, smiling gallantly.

On the next day, the evening papers contained a notice of the engagement of Miss Louise Delancy to Prince Seminoff. The marriage, it was announced, would take place during the spring.

CHAPTER XIII.

A NIHILIST.

"MY dear Baron, we are old friends, and I have come to beg you to do me a service. I wish you would give me some information in reference to Prince Seminoff. Who is he?"

These words were uttered by Colonel Delancy in the cabinet of the Russian Minister. He and the Baron were intimate, and it thus happened that Colonel Delancy, with the terror of Louise's marriage to Prince Seminoff hanging over him, had come to the Russian Minister to inquire about him. The Prince's antecedents might be such as to prove an obstacle to the marriage. It was a last desperate hope.

"Prince Seminoff?" said the smiling old minister with his foreign accent, "he is — Prince Seminoff, my dear friend."

"A prince of the empire?"

"Yes. There are a great many. It's a conventional title."

"He has lived in Russia, I suppose?"

"In Paris chiefly."

"His character is — ?"

The minister shrugged his shoulders a little, with the air of a philosopher.

"The world is so censorious!" he said; "I am afraid our friend the Prince has somewhat the reputation of what the French call a *mauvais sujet*."

The Colonel nodded.

"But you know him personally?"

"Yes. The acquaintance is slight, however. There are reasons, to be frank, why the Prince and myself should not be very intimate."

"Do you feel at liberty to state the reasons, Baron?"

"Certainly, my dear friend. The Prince is under surveillance."

"Under surveillance?"

"All the prominent Nihilists are — in all countries."

"The Nihilists? Is Prince Seminoff a member of the Nihilist Society?"

"There is very little doubt of it; the government has no actual proof, but then, proof on such a subject is of all things the most difficult to obtain. You see I am speaking without reserve, — I owe that to our old friendship, and the conviction that you are a discreet person. The name of Prince Seminoff is on the list of 'dangerous and suspected;' and you will now understand why he and myself are not precisely bosom friends. As the representative of his Imperial Majesty, whom the Nihilists aim to overthrow, I am naturally an enemy of the Nihilist Society."

"Indeed!" said Colonel Delancy, thoughtfully. "I had supposed, from the friendly salutes you exchange when you meet, that your relations were different."

The Baron smiled, and again shrugged his shoulders.

"There is very little to be said in favor of the manners of diplomatic people, my dear Colonel. What they say or look means very little — in fact nothing. For the rest, I take the world as it is, and men as they are. I denounce Nihilism bitterly in public, and regard it with real indignation; but then it is a phase of politics in the nineteenth century, and a man learns in time to regard phases of politics philosophically."

"Very true."

"These men are criminals, of course, and play for their heads, since they aim at the subversion of the government, which can only be effected by violence."

"Necessarily. So the Prince is a member of the Nihilist Society?"

"I may say at least that the fact is tolerably well ascertained that he is in regular communication with the order in Russia. To speak more plainly, he is certainly one of the leaders of the society."

"He is then a dangerous person?"

"Unquestionably."

"An advocate of violence, or, to be more precise, of the murder of the Emperor? I use a plain term, but it expresses the idea."

"It expresses it with the utmost precision, my dear Colonel. No term could better do so. The Emperor's life is in daily danger. The least desirable of earthly positions is that of a monarch in the time that goes. It really is too — what you call in English *touch-and-go!*"

"But Prince Seminoff —"

"I beg your pardon. You inquired whether he advocated violence. I do not know. The Nihilists keep their secrets with astonishing success. Many of the order only aim at a redress of grievances, and profess to be good citizens. They only murder now and then by accident, — and then they are mad people! Remember Vera Sassulitch, and General Trepoff! That woman is still living and is unpunished."

"Yes. Then you have no knowledge whether the Prince is an advocate of moderation or of murder?"

"I really have none."

"You spoke of his life in Paris. It was discreditable, I believe you intimated."

"To be plain, it is said to have been exceedingly disreputable. I speak without reserve, since it is obvious that you attach importance to a correct knowledge of this gentleman."

"Very great importance. He seeks an alliance with a member of my family."

The Baron took out his snuff-box.

"With your family?"

"He is a suitor for the hand of my niece."

The Baron took a pinch of snuff, and presented the box to Colonel Delancy.

"I am going to break one of my fixed rules, my dear Colonel Delancy," he said. "Do not encourage this alliance."

"I ask nothing better than to have grounds for preventing it. Unfortunately, what you communicate to me is too vague to afford such grounds."

"That is true, I am afraid."

"You only inform me that Prince Seminoff is affiliated with the Nihilist Society, and that his life in Paris has been rather *discreditable*. The word is indefinite."

"You are right, my friend; but shall I give you my advice?"

"I should value it highly."

"Delay the marriage if it has been arranged. I cannot inform you at this moment why I counsel that; but believe me, the advice is sound."

Colonel Delancy sighed.

"The only trouble is that I am afraid I shall not be able to do so," he said.

"Have things proceeded so far?"

The Colonel's only reply was a melancholy shake of the head, which was more eloquent than words. He then rose, and said, —

"If I can follow your advice I will do so, Baron. A last question: Why is Prince Seminoff in this country?"

"You might guess that."

"I confess I am unable to do so."

"The Prince is ruined."

"Ruined?"

"A long time since; and his object in coming to America is to exchange his title of Prince for the money-bags of you inferior people!"

"Do you think so?"

"I have no doubt at all of it," said the smiling Baron. "Prince Seminoff is a very intelligent person, but he labors under a very general impression that the Americans are all rolling in wealth, and mad for titles."

"I ought to feel very much obliged to the Prince for selecting my family."

"It proves at least that you stand high in his estimation, and that he supposes the young person will reinforce his finances."

They shook hands and parted. The poor old Colonel passed his hand over his gray side-whiskers in a forlorn manner. He had never felt more depressed in his life.

CHAPTER XIV.

SEMINOFF REQUESTS A PASSPORT.

AS Colonel Delancy drove away from the residence of the Russian Minister, another carriage stopped in front of the house, and Prince Seminoff got out of it. The Prince was in full dress; and as the weather was still a little chilly in spite of the advance of spring, he wore a superb suit of furs. Above rose his Cossack face — a very singular face indeed; rather pale, apparently from exhaustion of the red-blood globules, not of the owner's energies. The eyes were exceedingly wary, and from time to time the Prince looked over his shoulder. He went up the steps, sent in his card, and was at once admitted to the reception room of the minister.

"Good-morning, Prince."

"Good-morning, your Excellency."

They both spoke in Russian.

The Prince was not the same person. His whole face beamed with cordial courtesy and frank pleasure. He took the seat which the minister indicated, making a profound bow as he did so, and said, —

"I have called to request your Excellency to supply me with a passport to visit Russia."

"Ah! To visit Russia, my dear Prince!" the minister said, leaning back and smiling.

"My estates require attention, Baron. The complaints I receive are terrible. My tenants are almost in revolt."

"That is very bad news. I fear the general condition of affairs in our poor Russia is deplorable."

The Prince sighed.

"Unfortunately there is only too much ground for what you say, Baron. The great trouble, I am afraid, is from the secret societies, which embroil all classes. As long as these are suffered to pursue their course and foment discontent, the agitations which we both regret so much will continue."

"What you say is only too true. Every friend of law and order must deprecate the existence of these conspiracies against the mild and paternal government of his Majesty."

"Every true friend of his Majesty. The passport, your Excellency — ?"

"Ah, yes, my dear Prince! You wish to visit Russia?"

"As soon as possible, my dear Baron; and I beg that you will make out the passport for myself and the Princess Seminoff."

"Ah! *the Princess?* You design then to marry?"

"A *belle Americaine*, — a young demoiselle of the family of Delancy, one of the oldest and most honorable in the country."

"Let me congratulate you. When do your nuptials take place?"

"Without delay, I trust. There is no obstacle. The young lady's family have consented to every arrangement."

"You will take Madame to Russia? The journey will possess novelty."

"We will return to reside there like honest people on our estates. In truth, I am quite weary, dear Baron, of all this wandering. I am no longer young, and find the prospect of a life hereafter in our dear Russia more attractive than dissipation. I regret to have to confess that I have yielded too much to the temptations of *belle Paris*. I go now with my Princess to reside *en bon seigneur* on my paternal lands, and essay to live as a quiet countryman and good subject of his Imperial Majesty."

"A commendable design, my dear Prince. When do you wish for your passport?"

"At once, if agreeable to your Excellency. My disponent writes that my presence is absolutely necessary. Will your Excellency pardon me for calling your attention to the fact that there are blank forms on the table at your elbow?"

The Baron smiled, but did not move.

"I see no objection to issuing your passport. But there are always a few little formalities to observe."

The wary glance of Prince Seminoff encountered the smiling one of the Baron. It was perfectly plain that they understood each other.

"I had hoped," said the Prince, knitting his brows with an air of disappointment, "that your Excellency would not consider it essential to observe the formality to which you refer."

"It is always better to observe formalities, Prince."

"Your Excellency is empowered to observe or neglect this one at your discretion."

The Baron took a pinch of snuff and smiled, but did not reply.

"The precaution you propose to employ is only used in the case of suspected persons," the Prince said, moodily; "does your Excellency suspect that I have any other designs in visiting Russia than to attend to my private affairs?"

The question was sufficiently direct; but the Baron was apparently accustomed to parry questions of all descriptions.

"Since you tell me that such is your object, it would be discourteous in me to doubt it."

The Prince again knit his brows, and looked at the Baron keenly.

"Let us be frank, Baron — you believe the reports spread by my enemies. You regard me as a dangerous character, and are going to telegraph to St. Petersburg for instructions in regard to my passport — to ascertain from his Majesty himself whether I am or am not to enter Russia."

The Baron smiled.

"It is only stepping into the next room. The distance to St. Petersburg is only an hour, if so much."

"Then your Excellency makes no secret of the fact that you will telegraph?"

"I am in regular communication with his Majesty — it would be no trouble to mention your request."

The Prince remained silent for some moments.

"Let me say once more, frankly — your Excellency suspects me. It is an injustice. There is no more faithful subject of his Majesty in his entire dominions."

"I am glad to receive your assurance of the fact, Prince."

"Your Excellency suspects me! I return to that formula. I am regarded as a dangerous person."

"I have not expressed any such view."

"You have not repudiated it — your Excellency has listened to my enemies."

"Have you enemies?"

"I have a number of them. Every man has. To be plain, your Excellency regards me as a member of the Nihilist Society."

"Has any charge of so grave a description been brought against you, my dear Prince?"

"Yes, as it has been brought without warrant against many of the best subjects of his Majesty."

"It is distressing!"

"The charge is a pure calumny. I have no connection whatever with the Nihilists — I abhor the very name."

The Baron bowed, and took snuff with the air of a man very much gratified.

"You will grant the passport without telegraphing, my dear Baron?"

The Prince's tone had grown coaxing. The frankest possible smile appeared on his sallow face.

"It really is unnecessary. Your discretion is unlimited. Can there be any danger to his Majesty's government in permitting a good subject to return to his home and regulate his private affairs on his lands?"

"I should suppose there would be no objection whatever to your request."

"Your Excellency will grant the passport?"

"I will reflect upon the subject, and give you a reply to-morrow, Prince."

The Prince looked extremely glum, but seemed to realize the fact that nothing could be effected by further diplomacy. He rose.

"I will return to-morrow, then, and will now take my leave. Before doing so, however, I beg that your Excellency will pay no attention to these discreditable reports which connect me with the abominable society of the Nihilists. These malevolent accusations could only have reached you through persons inimical to me — who wish to get rid of me by drawing down on my innocent head the suspicions and consequent vengeance of his Majesty. I protest once more that such charges are utterly groundless. I have not at present, never have had, and never shall have, any sympathy with these enemies of law and order. In communicating with his Majesty, which it is obviously your Excellency's

intention to do, I beseech you to assure him of my complete devotion to his person, and the rule of his august dynasty."

The Prince bowed; and the Baron, who had risen politely, made a bow in response.

"Your sentiments do you honor, Prince. I shall have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow."

"Without fail. I have the honor to bid your Excellency good-morning."

And the Prince retired. The Baron closed the door and returned to his seat. A sweet smile slowly expanded upon his quiet old face, and he inhaled a pinch of snuff.

"That worthy will end his days in Siberia," he said, "or on the gallows. But who knows? Strange things happen in the time that passes. He may end it as one of the high dignitaries of the Empire — or Republic."

On the next day Prince Seminoff called at the Russian embassy and found his passport awaiting him. The Baron presented it to him, and he received it with a bow.

"I am glad your Excellency has been pleased to represent me in my true light, as a faithful subject of his Majesty," he said.

The Baron bowed politely.

"Has your Excellency any commands?"

"None, with many thanks, Prince. You will set out soon?"

"Immediately after my marriage, which will take place without delay."

"Permit me to congratulate you. You go by way of Paris?"

"Possibly — it is tempting; but I must shun temptation. Henceforth I shall live in quiet on my estates, and, like a good country *seigneur*, see to my poor tenants."

"That is highly honorable, Prince. A pleasant voyage!"

"Your Excellency is very obliging."

The Prince bowed, and took his departure with a smile of satisfaction. The Baron remained standing, with his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the door through which he had disappeared.

"His Majesty has committed an error," he muttered. "It is placing confidence in a wolf of the steppes! What does it mean?"

He went to the table, and lifting a green cloth which he had thrown over it when the Prince was announced, took a paper from a pile and looked at it thoughtfully. It was a telegraphic despatch from St. Petersburg, and contained the following words: —

"The Prince and Princess Seminoff have the Emperor's permission to visit their estates in Russia."

Under this lay a second telegram in cipher, also from St. Petersburg:

"Prince S. will be accompanied by a sure person, who will not lose sight of him. Important."

CHAPTER XV.

AT THE HONORABLE MR. ORDMORE'S.

LOUISE DELANCY was seated in her chamber leaning her forehead upon her hand. Her eyes were fixed upon the fire, and she was lost in reflection. She did not seem to be as much bowed down by her critical situation as might have been supposed. Her face was thin, and there were dark rings around the poor eyes which indicated sleeplessness; but there was absolutely nothing to show that she had weakly yielded to despair. This is often the case with persons of apparently unresisting dispositions. They retain a residue of courage under all trials; and Louise was sustained by one fixed resolve — that she would never marry Prince Seminoff.

She had quietly announced this determination to her mother, and Mrs. Ordmore had laughed at her. The lady was perfectly sure of bending her will and effecting the marriage. She had simply ordered Louise to prepare for the ceremony, and had made every arrangement in connection with her trousseau. Only an hour before, mother and daughter had held an interview on the subject, and the lady had come

out of Louise's chamber in a rage. Louise had quietly listened, scarcely making any reply; and was now probably reflecting upon some decisive course, when her door opened. She turned her head. It was the Honorable Mr. Ordmore.

Mr. Ordmore came in, walking slowly, with the assistance of a cane, and wheezing. There was not the least trace of a scowl on his face. It was wonderful how soft the small eyes looked as they fixed themselves on the girl.

"Come here, little one," said Mr. Ordmore; "I have a word to say to you."

Louise rose and came to him. He bent down and kissed her.

"I am going to stop this marriage," he said. "That rascal shall not marry you against your will! Curse the scoundrel! There are some things I don't mean to stand, and this is one. As your mother is no friend of yours, *I'll* be your friend! I say that rascal shall not marry you!"

Louise flushed and uttered a sob.

"Oh, that is so kind! It is the first kind word I have heard in this house!" she said.

"Well, what you say is an infernal shame, Louise!"

Mr. Ordmore spoke in a labored voice. His face was flushed, but all the coldness and vulgarity had gone out of it as he looked at the girl.

"There never was a greater shame — I'll prevent it. I am master here, and that Seminoff shall not have you! A girl's hand is her own when she

is placed in your situation. A mother has the right to oppose a bad marriage, but not to force one. You are a woman. You have your rights. One of your rights is not to be forced into the arms of this Russian scoundrel!"

"I would rather die!" said Louise in a trembling but resolute tone.

"You are right. I say a good girl is not a doll. I have known good girls — I knew one whose name was Fanny. I loved her so much that I acted like a rascal; but when I found that she cared nothing for me I acted like a man — not a dog!"

He stopped, breathing heavily.

"It was not her fault that she cared nothing for me — it was my bad luck. If she had I would have been better. I went to the bad after that. I have not done much good in this world, and a great deal of evil. It is too late to make up for it now, but I mean to do one thing. I swear this fellow shall not marry you. Do you hear, Louise? I came to tell you that. I'm the master here — set your mind at rest. If they set themselves against me, I'll break somebody's neck!"

Mr. Ordmore scowled. As he spoke, the bell rang in the hall beneath, announcing a visitor. As the door of the chamber had been left open by Mr. Ordmore, they could hear the sound of steps as the visitor was shown in.

"He has come — the last arrangements were to be made this morning!" Louise exclaimed.

"Very well," said Mr. Ordmore; "I'll be present."

Louise ran between him and the door.

"Don't go down! You will be angry, and it will make you ill!" she cried.

"Well, if it does I'll risk it," he said. "Let me pass, Louise."

He put his arms around her, and bending down kissed her forehead.

"If I had only had a daughter!" he said.

And in spite of every effort made by the girl to detain him, he went out of the chamber and slowly descended the staircase.

The visitor was Prince Seminoff. He had gone into the drawing-room, and found Mrs. Ordmore awaiting him.

"At last!" she said, approaching him quickly. "I thought you were never coming."

He took her hand and kissed it.

"Do you think I stayed away from you longer than —"

The door opened.

"Mr. Ordmore!" exclaimed the lady, retreating from Prince Seminoff.

"What are you plotting?" said Mr. Ordmore, stopping in the middle of the room and scowling at the Prince. He struck the cane in his hand on the floor, and stood looking at them.

"Prince Seminoff called to —"

"I was not speaking to you," said Mr. Ordmore, glaring at her. "I was speaking to your dear friend Seminoff."

He struck his cane on the floor again, looking at Prince Seminoff.

"I say what are *you* doing here? Have you come to marry little Louise? You know she can't bear the sight of you — let her alone!"

Mrs. Ordmore trembled slightly. She had never heard her husband speak in a tone so violent.

"Let her alone!" repeated Mr. Ordmore, addressing the lady in turn; "it's infernally low — its disgraceful! You're a pattern of a mother! You are forcing your daughter to make a match with a man she hates — but I'll prevent it! You want my money — I am speaking to you, Seminoff! If that's what you are after you can save yourself further trouble. Do you know my opinion of you? — you are a scoundrel!"

Again the cane came down with a crash on the carpet.

"I say you are a scoundrel! I know that sort of people when I see 'em — and you are one!"

Mrs. Ordmore rushed between them, for Mr. Ordmore looked dangerous. He pushed her away, and said, advancing toward Prince Seminoff, —

"Go out of this house!"

The Prince was pale with anger.

"I will go — if I am to be outraged!"

"Do! — and don't come back! — or — "

As he uttered these words Mr. Ordmore caught at the table, tottered, and fell at full length on the floor.

For a moment Prince Seminoff and Mrs. Ordmore stood looking at the prostrate man, who was breathing heavily. Neither of them went to his assistance.

Finally the lady hastened to the bell and rang it violently. The servants ran and lifted Mr. Ordmore from the floor. Behind the group Prince Seminoff and Mrs. Ordmore exchanged a significant glance.

On the same evening the journals of the capital announced the death of the Honorable Mr. Ordmore. While seated in his drawing-room conversing cheerfully with visitors, he had suddenly fallen forward, from a stroke of apoplexy, and in spite of every exertion of his physicians, had expired an hour afterwards.

The great estate of Mr. Ordmore, the journals added, would fall to Mrs. Ordmore. He had no near relatives, and had died without a will, though the beginning of such an instrument had been found among his papers. The journals did not add that Mr. Ordmore had written, "I give to my stepdaughter, Louise Delancy, on condition that she does not marry that rascal S—" but there the will ended. It had never been finished by Mr. Ordmore.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE YACHT.

THESE scenes took place at the end of winter. The spring was near now, and the trees in the public grounds were putting out their leaves. As the days passed on, the foliage grew denser and of a darker green; the sky was bluer, and the songs of birds filled the air — May was coming, and about to bring with her the bright days and the odor of flowers.

Mr. Waring, journalist, was aware of the season, and pined. Having been born in the country, he had an indifferent opinion of cities. He endured them with equanimity during the winter, and did not grumble; but with the approach of spring he began to long for the fields and streams. If he were only in the country now and not in town! If he could go off somewhere and lounge and dream under forest boughs, and forget that such a place as Newspaper Row was in existence! Where was Armyn? — he had been invited to visit his house on the bay. But Armyn was still absent, and seemed to have vanished. Old James, the servant, could tell him nothing. His master never said where he was

going, or when he would be back; and Waring had been compelled to go away time after time with the unsatisfactory announcement that his friend had not returned. Thus Armyn gave no sign; but it was not without justice that Mr. Waring said that he was at the centre of intelligence. He was not only an early recipient of all news for the Associated Press, and cognizant of the contents of special telegrams, but he frequently caught in vague rumor the substance of private despatches addressed to the heads of Departments. Through these he thought he traced Armyn in several directions. An agent of some foreign power was negotiating for arms and war material in many places. It was obvious that these negotiations were meant to be private; but it is difficult to avoid the omnipresent eye of the press; and the government was evidently informed of the movements of the agent in question, whose description, Waring informed himself, just suited his friend Armyn. As the month of April advanced, the New England journals began to discuss the eccentric movements of this private agent — to protest against any entanglement with friendly powers by supplying war material to belligerents, and to call on the government to "arrest any person or persons engaged in schemes calculated to disturb international harmony." It was a glittering generality, and meant nothing in particular; but then it is necessary to fill a certain space in the editorial columns of a morning paper; and finding nothing else at hand, the gentlemen of the

press filled it with Armyn, or the personage whom Waring took for Armyn.

Waring read the despatches about this New England conspirator with great attention, but they gave him no precise explanation of his friend's business. What was it? It was immensely puzzling. He would certainly demand a full statement on the subject when Armyn came back. But then, he never was coming back, it seemed, and Mr. Waring felt a sense of injury.

One night he was passing Armyn's in a very bad humor, going to the Row. He scarcely took the trouble to turn his head, he had been disappointed so often. But he did turn his head, as he passed — and there was the light in Armyn's library!

To say that Mr. Waring started with joy would be too strong a statement. In fact, he did not do so. But he exclaimed, "By Jove! he's back at last!" and rushed, and rang the bell, and a moment afterwards was shaking hands with his friend. Armyn looked very much fatigued, but his face was brighter and his manner more cordial than Waring remembered to have seen it for a long time.

He burst forth into questions: Where had Armyn been? What was his business at the North? Was he aware that serious reports had reached the ears of government, and that an order had been issued from the State Department for his arrest? Armyn bore all this banter of his friend with great equanimity. Something evidently pleased him and put him in an excellent humor.

"I have a great many things to tell you," he said, "and particularly all about a journey I have made in a direction different from that of New England, my dear Waring. But I really cannot to-night. I am quite broken down. I am going in a day or two to my house on the bay. Come with me, and then I will tell you my story. Will you go?"

"Will I go! I am pining for grass and water! I will go with rapture. Tom Winter will take charge of my special letter. That boy is cut out for a journalist, though no one would believe it. I'll go with an emotion of wild delight!"

"Shall we travel on horseback?"

"On horseback?"

"I have two excellent horses here, and will post relays. It is not more than thirty miles to the bay — we might travel at a gallop. The fact is, I am dying for want of exercise; and a horseback-ride will set me up again — will you ride with me?"

"Will I ride!" exclaimed Waring. "What a question to ask a Virginian! Did you ever know one of that superior race who would *walk* a quarter of a mile if he had only to go a mile to catch and saddle his horse?"

"Well, I think I can appreciate that; a man likes the saddle, or he does not like it. I like it, and as you will go with me I will order the relay by telegraph to-day. There is a station on the railway not far from Montrose — the name of my house — to which your baggage can be expressed, and we

will cross the bay in my yacht, and arrive in time for dinner."

"Your yacht! Have you a yacht?"

"A very good one. It will meet us."

"My dear Armyn, you are a magician of the Arabian Nights. You have relays — no doubt, of Arabian steeds — and yachts, to travel by! The era of railways and ferry-boats has vanished — I live at last in the world of the imagination!"

"Well, I'm sure that is a pleasure to you. All literary men are poetical. Come and breakfast with me day after to-morrow, and we will set out."

Everything was thus arranged, and Waring took leave of his friend in the highest spirits. Nothing more delightful could have been proposed to him than this horseback excursion; and he made the arrangement at once for his special letter. Tom Winter took charge of it without a word, and on the morning appointed Mr. Waring punctually made his appearance at Armyn's. He was equipped in riding-boots, and had the air of a youth going on a fox-hunt. In fact, there was a great deal of the boy still in Waring, as there very often is in persons with beards on their faces. The two friends breakfasted, and the horses were led to the door. A quarter of an hour afterwards they were out of the city and going at full gallop in the direction of the bay.

It was plain that Armyn enjoyed the free horseback exercise as much as his friend. In fact, a man

who has once acquired a taste for the saddle, rarely loses it; when he is prevented from indulging it for a certain time it becomes almost a necessity. The horses they rode were fresh, and Waring's joy seemed to touch the point of rapture.

"What a day! and what horses to have under a man!" he exclaimed.

"I was certain you would enjoy your ride, and that induced me to propose it."

"Enjoy it? There is no adequate term for it. I had nearly lost sight of one of the chief joys of existence, Armyn! But really you will knock up your horses if we go on at this rate."

"Don't be afraid: you won't hurt them."

They went on at the same gait, through fields and woods and little hamlets where curious eyes stared at them. The horses justified Armyn's statement, and did not flag.

"Here is the relay," Armyn said, after they had gone on at full speed for about an hour and a half. "I ordered fresh horses to meet me at that little tavern yonder."

They were standing in front of the wayside inn awaiting the travellers. The saddles were changed; the groom touched his hat, and led away the horses from which they had dismounted; and the friends continued their way as before. Soon the odor of salt water came borne on a light wind from the bay. The road passed through a belt of oaks, suddenly rounded a curve, and there before them was the broad expanse of Chesapeake Bay, the surface rippling in the wind, and covered with spangles.

Directly in front of them was a cabin, the home of a fisherman and his family, and a hundred yards from shore a small vessel, fore-and-aft rigged, was dancing lightly on the ripples. Armyn dismounted in front of the cabin, and a black servant who had evidently been waiting for him came to take the horses. At the same moment a skiff rowed by two men put off from the yacht, and came dancing under the long oar-strokes toward the shore. In a few minutes it touched land, and Armyn got into it with Waring. He had shaken hands cordially with the men, who were the ordinary 'longshoremen of the Chesapeake; and Waring could see that there was a feeling of comradeship between them. The oars fell, and the skiff darted back over the ripples; reached the yacht, which was a graceful bark of about seventy-five tons, slender, low in the water, and with cases for the regulation lights; and in a few moments the friends were standing on the deck.

The crew consisted of two or three additional men, 'longshoremen like the first, and quite as glad to see Armyn as their comrades. The commander, who was apparently an old sailor, saluted and shook hands, and after conversing with him for a moment, Armyn came back to Waring.

"We have made good time on the ride," he said: "would you like a little excursion before dinner, my dear Waring? I confess I should like it myself. I am a sailor by predilection, and am never so happy as when I am upon the water. Decide — you are my guest, and shall direct everything."

"The excursion! I am not hungry! What a morning! what sunshine!"

"In any event, you need not starve. Come down to the cabin with me."

They went down into the small cabin, which was a model of comfort. On a table stood a box of cigars, a bottle of wine and some biscuits, just placed there by a servant who stood waiting. Waring observed that his friend shook hands with this servant, as he had done with everybody.

"There is a word the Arabs use when a friend enters their tents, Waring. It is a very good word —it is 'welcome!'" Armyn said, smiling.

CHAPTER XVII.

BOY AND GIRL.

THE yacht had turned round as gracefully as a wild duck, balanced herself for a moment, and headed down the bay.

Gradually the long wooded shore receded from view, and became a hazy line between the water and the sky. Now and then a white sail glimmered in the distance; water-fowl with wings as white hovered above the ripples crested with delicate foam; the May sunshine flooded with mild glory every object; and Mr. Waring, journalist once, but country boy for the moment, seemed to have reached the very summit of human enjoyment.

He and Armyn had come up on deck, and were seated in the forequarter. The sailors, grouped near the helm, had that air of resting which characterizes their class, and talked in low tones. As the whole length of the deck was between the two groups, nothing uttered in one could be distinguished in the other, and practically the friends were alone on the yacht. Neither seemed to care to talk. Certain surroundings and atmospheric conditions induce reverie, and make it more delightful than

the most brilliant conversation. Waring was smoking as usual, and had evidently reached that supreme mood when the body and mind are in equilibrium, and a man has for the moment nothing more to desire.

He was aroused from his reverie by Armyn, who said, pointing to a line of trees just visible on the surface of the water, —

"There is the Eastern Shore — the yacht is making headway."

Waring waked up.

"Your house is over there?" he said.

"More to the north. Are you tired? Shall we tack back? Issue your orders, my dear guest."

"By no means. I am far from tired. I was indulging in the most delightful of day-dreams, and the idea of returning to land and civilization is absurd."

"What were you thinking of?"

"Hard to say; of the water, the wind, my great book, and a friend of mine."

"Who is your friend?"

"His name is Armyn. He is a curious fellow, and a bundle of mysteries. He promises to clear up all the mystery on the first occasion, and he has not done so."

Waring looked straight at Armyn.

"If he were here to-day do you know what I would say to him? I would say, 'There is no better time for a man to talk to a friend than a moment like this, when they are alone together, with nothing but the wild waste of waters around them!'"

Armyn made no reply for a moment. He then said, —

"I have no objection — none at all, dear Waring. You mean that you wish me to explain some things in connection with myself which puzzle you and excite your curiosity. There is no reason why I should not do so."

"You will tell me everything?"

Waring suddenly rose erect, and looked at his friend with an ardent expression.

"You are going to clear up all this mystery about yourself and — Fanchette!"

"Why not? There could be no better time, as you say, than the present. I was prevented from doing so by mere accident before — it is perhaps fortunate, as I can now tell you what I could not have told you at that time."

Armyn spoke in a tone of quiet sadness, in which there was no trace, however, of actual melancholy.

"I have always thought," he said, "that friends ought to have as few concealments from each other as possible. I do not like concealment, and have a very bad opinion of people who do. What has happened to me in my life has happened to a great many persons besides myself, and there is only one incident of the story which may be called singular. I will come to it after a few words about myself — they need not detain you long."

Armyn spoke quietly, and his expression was that of a man who recalls certain events and emotions in his past life with philosophic calmness.

"I was born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland," he said, "and at sixteen was sent to the Virginia Military Institute. During my absence a great blow fell upon me — I lost my father and mother. I was alone in the world, and had scarcely a relation to cheer me in my distress. When I came back home, the prospect before me seemed unutterably dreary. I was alone in a big house, with only an old housekeeper and the family servants, and I remember the lonely meals, and what an utter depression came to me from the contrast. Persons who have always been surrounded with bright faces can scarcely conceive of my feelings. I am a man of warm affections, and to see no one I loved in the old home was inexpressibly afflicting.

"I will not speak further of this. It was necessary to tell you my situation in order to explain what followed. I shut myself up in the dreary old mansion, and rarely went out except to sail on the bay. I had a sailboat, and had learned in my childhood all about the water. I could manage a craft, and may say without vanity that I am a good sailor. Now long excursions on the bay were my only resource — and if a gale came at any time when I was out of sight of land, it was more than welcome as a diversion from my brooding melancholy. Well, time wore on in this manner until I was eighteen. Then my good spirits returned — as will happen to youth. I had scarcely visited anybody, but now went occasionally to spend the evening with a lady who had been the friend of my

mother, — Mrs. Dearing, who lived a few miles distant. She was a widow in reduced circumstances, and lived modestly in her little establishment with her only daughter Fanny; and this young lady thenceforward became the one thought of my life. She was very young, and exquisitely beautiful in face and figure, — to be brief, I fell deeply in love with her, and soon found that she preferred me to all others who paid her their addresses. I think this arose from her pity and sympathy for me — a poor boy without father or mother. However that might have been, we became engaged to be married; and from that moment all my sadness disappeared. I was perfectly happy, and we were to be married in a few months. A single circumstance alone gave me momentary uneasiness; and the event proved that this instinctive feeling was well grounded. Among Fanny's old suitors was one whose name was Ordmore — you have known him since that time as the Honorable Mr. Ordmore, the millionnaire."

Armyn spoke in a quiet voice, but it was easy to see that he uttered the name of Ordmore with deep repugnance. Waring listened without speaking.

"At that time," Armyn went on, "he was very far from being a millionnaire. He had a small estate, and his social rank was not precisely the best, but he was good-looking and plausible. He drove a handsome equipage, and Fanny was fond of driving out; so, in spite of my engagement, he continued his isits at Mrs. Dearing's. This was

not very pleasant, and I had a vague impression that Ordmore was more than a match for me. He was several years my senior, and did not fail on every occasion to impress the fact upon me — not offensively, but none the less plainly. Well, I need not say that this was not exactly to my taste. It was rather a delicate matter to formulate my views in so many words, but at last Ordmore's attentions to Fanny became so unmistakable that I went and demanded an explanation. The explanation was ready. He professed the utmost astonishment.

"'Pay his addresses to Miss Dearing? What could have led to such a charge? He knew of my engagement, and had not the least idea of meddling with me, or offering me such an offence. He was an old friend of the Dearing family — he only called as he had been in the habit of doing. Was there any harm in that? If Miss Fanny Dearing complained of it, he would not come again.'

"You see, my dear Waring, that last view of the subject was astute — and unanswerable. It placed me in a disagreeable position. Fanny was fond of company, and, like all women, had a weakness for her unlucky suitors. Ordmore had certainly been refused by her, and his continued friendship was creditable. So I found myself suddenly checkmated by the proposal to cease his visits — if Fanny wished him to discontinue them. A long conversation followed. Ordmore protested his entire innocence. At last I found myself yielding to his representations, and went away with the con-

viction that I had done him a wrong. Well, this was the state of affairs when the North and South began to make war on each other. I caught the war fever, and could not bear the thought of staying at home, as I might very well have done. Maryland had not seceded from the Union, and I was a Marylander; but then my mother was a Virginian, and I had been educated at the Virginia Institute, in the midst of the strong Southern sentiment there. To be brief, I determined to join the Southern forces, and did so.

"My parting with poor Fanny — you will soon understand why I say 'poor' — was a distressing scene. She wept as if her heart would break, and we took leave of each other, exchanging love-tokens. I have hers still — it was a tea-rose which she took from her neck and gave me, crying. My gift was my own likeness, in a sailor's suit, which she had expressed a wish to have. It was set in a bracelet, that dropped in the snow — "

"Then Fanchette is — " cried Waring, looking at his friend, and not finishing the sentence.

"It would be better, perhaps," said Armyn, "to let me proceed with my story in the regular order of the occurrences. I shall tell you in a moment how I made the discovery that your friend Miss Fanchette is my poor Fanny's daughter. I parted with the poor dear girl, very heavy-hearted at the prospect of not seeing her again for a long time — not knowing that the parting was our last. It was, as you will soon find. I went away, crossed the

Potomac and joined the Southern forces, and then I soon made your acquaintance. I enjoyed army life, and you may remember that I was always in high spirits. There was little to depress me. I believed that the war would soon end. The very moment peace came I would go back and marry Fanny, and the letters I received from her through the blockade gave me the assurance that she would be as happy at my return as myself.

"Well, all at once Fanny's letters stopped. It was late in the war, and the blockade was then more stringent, so at first I felt no disquiet at no longer hearing from her. At last, however, her silence began to fill me with utter depression and alarm. Then I suddenly discovered everything."

Armyn stopped, and seemed to be reflecting. He then went on quietly:

"Fanny had written regularly, and her letters had been intercepted by Ordmore. He had stayed at home and continued his visits to Mrs. Dearing, or rather the young lady — no doubt calculating on the effect of absence, or the chance of my death. I found out afterwards that he always professed the warmest interest in Fanny's feelings for me — offered to assist her in communicating with me, and took charge of her letters to deliver to persons running the blockade. My own letters he managed in some manner to intercept — hers to me he destroyed. Then the end came. One day I was in my tent brooding over all this, when a man from our neighborhood who had run the Potomac blockade,

brought me a letter. It was written by my old housekeeper left in charge of my establishment. Fanny Dearing and Ordmore had disappeared together."

"Good heavens!"

"That shocks you. I need not say that it nearly crazed *me*. The effect was like a blow, and stunned me for the time. Then I finished reading the letter — I can see the page at this moment. Mrs. Dearing had died about three months before, Fanny was about to go to a distant relation's — when the news suddenly came that she and Ordmore had gone off to be married. This was the conclusion, at least. They had left the Eastern Shore in the same train, bound for the North."

"I shall never again respect any woman!" exclaimed Waring.

"Guard yourself from that injustice, friend," said Armyn, "and wait until I finish. This young lady was not at all the person you imagine. Well, perhaps you remember the effect produced upon me by that letter. I lost all my good spirits, and was profoundly wretched. This, you will agree, was natural. I had given my whole heart to poor Fanny. I placed the most implicit confidence in her love for me — and now the intelligence came that this love had been a wretched piece of deception. You read such incidents in newspapers, and they make no impression upon you — or in novels, and you say that the author is a mere sensation-writer. When they happen in your own case you

believe them, and they alter your whole character. This altered mine, and I moped and raged. If I had met Ordmore then I suppose I should have killed him without a word. It was not until the war was over that I met him, after a long search for him — for he had disappeared from his neighborhood. It was on Broadway, in a crowd; but I caught him by the arm violently and drew him into a doorway.

"I have been looking for you," I said: "I have found you at last. Where is Fanny Dearing?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

MAN AND WOMAN.

ORDMORE looked at me," continued Armyn, "with the expression of a man who sees a ghost. I believe that he thought I was dead. He turned pale, and made no reply at first; then he burst forth into protestations.

"He was utterly astounded that any such charge should be made against him. He knew nothing of Miss Dearing. He had not seen her for years. During the first months of the war he had continued to visit Mrs. Dearing's occasionally, but at last his many business engagements had prevented even these infrequent calls.

"'Did you, or did you not, leave the neighborhood on the same train with Miss Dearing?' I said.

"I recalled the fact to him, he replied — he had forgotten it. He now remembered that he was going from home on business, had met Miss Dearing on the train, and wondered where she was going. He had naturally accosted her, and occupied the seat beside her for a part of the way — this was, no doubt, the foundation of the extraor-

dinary charge that they had gone off together. She had not spoken of herself at all, or informed him in which direction she was going. He had therefore asked no questions, considering that it would be an intrusion. He remembered only that he had taken up the impression that she was going to visit some relative; but he knew nothing about it, and had not heard of Miss Dearing since that time.

"Such was his story. It was plausible, and told with an air of truth. In a word, I was duped — you will soon discover that. But at the moment I had no more to say, and the interview ended. I made every effort to trace poor Fanny, but entirely failed to do so; and at last, in a fit of despair, determined to leave the country."

"With the object of dissipating your mind by travel?"

"Yes. It was an absolute necessity. By travel and action. I am naturally a man of action — it is the solace for all grief, with me. I found the solace — I will tell you how at another time. To do so now would divert me from my narrative. Well, I came back at last to the United States; went with you to the theatre that night, and in the young *comedienne*, Fanchette, saw the complete reproduction of the face and form of the woman I had loved — Fanny Dearing."

"I understand all now!"

"She is the living image of her mother, with the same extraordinary hair, the same eyes and

lips. Down to the least detail of her figure, in all her ways, the manner in which she turned her head over her shoulder and smiled — she was Fanny Dearing!"

"I can understand now the effect produced upon you."

"Certainly nothing could have been more startling. I felt my heart throb, and remember that you thought I had become suddenly unwell."

"I remember."

"Such resemblances have a singular effect — they bring back the dead. What I saw before me there on the stage — living, breathing — was a dead woman!"

Armyn spoke with the deepest sadness; but this gradually disappeared as he continued.

"I went away, supposing that it was only a strange resemblance. Such things occur, you know; and I was far from wishing to see the young lady again. I felt that it would only distress me unnecessarily. I do not think it is desirable to indulge in what is called the 'luxury of grief.' It unfits us for our life-work. Let the memory of the dead be treasured as something holy, and reserved for those quiet hours which come to all — it is better."

"It is best."

"I did not mean to go near her again — I mean Fanchette," said Armyn. "You know what induced me to break my resolution. She dropped her bracelet that day, and as soon as I saw it I

recognized it. There was no doubt that it was the one which I had given to my poor Fanny, since there was my own portrait; and I went to see Fanchette, determined to discover everything. I can only describe my feelings by saying that they were a mixture of wonder and incredulity. Was Fanchette the daughter of Fanny Dearing? Was Ordmore her father? If so, had he deserted the mother and the child? I was lost in a maze. Only one thing was certain — there was the bracelet and my own picture.

"Well, I went and saw the young lady, and returned her bracelet. It was a delicate matter to propound direct questions to her on so brief an acquaintance concerning her private affairs, but I fully intended to do so, when the interview was interrupted. I was obliged to go away, but I had by no means given up my intention. If necessary, I intended to follow her, as she was to leave the city on the same evening. But I thought it quite possible that you might discover all about her, as you were far better acquainted with her than myself."

"You wrote me a note, therefore?"

"Yes. You did not receive it, and Fanchette went away. I was called away in my turn immediately afterwards, but not before hearing from you what Fanchette had told you."

"It was not a great deal. Unless you have seen her —"

"I have not seen her again. But I have discovered everything in relation to her."

"In relation to Fanchette?"

"Let me tell you how. I need not say that I was determined to know. There was no longer any doubt in my mind that she was the daughter of my poor Fanny. I was also convinced that Ordmore was her father, and that he had deserted her mother; and I had fully resolved to go and charge him with it, and force him to provide for her. As to my own wrongs, I intended to let them sleep, since he was this girl's father. My revenge should be to force him to provide for Fanny Dearing's child."

"Yes, I understand; but you say you have discovered everything. Was Ordmore Fanchette's father?"

"He was not. I come to that now. When I left you after my interview with her I knew this much — that she was the daughter of a lady who had been killed in a railway accident near the town of Ithaca in New York, and that the name of this lady was Fanny Maurice, since that was the name in the ring. Well, I went to Ithaca and made minute inquiries. The persons living in the house formerly occupied by Mrs. Williams could tell me nothing. The lapse of time had obliterated every trace of the accident, and I came away disappointed. But I was far from abandoning hope, and commissioned an agent of the secret police to prosecute the inquiry. These men are now and then persons of acumen, and I found such a man. He went in turn to every station on the line of railway between New York and Ithaca, and finally discov-

ered under a pile of rubbish at one of the stations a lady's travelling-valise. It had, no doubt, been taken after the accident to this station, and kept to await the claim of the owner, and forgotten. It was what I was in search of, as the name 'Maurice' upon it showed. My agent claimed it, and it was delivered to him; and two days afterwards it was in my possession. It contained clothing and letters which at last put me on the track."

"On the track?"

"The letters were from a Mr. John Maurice in New York city, to his wife, Mrs. Fanny Maurice, in the village of Wabash, Missouri. One of them announced that he was extremely ill, and besought her to come to him. It was plain that she was on the way when the railway accident took place."

"You went to Missouri?"

"At once; and two hours after my arrival at the village of Wabash knew everything. Mrs. Maurice had lived with a respectable widow in the town, and this lady told me that they had talked over her affairs a thousand times. Ordmore and Fanny *had* gone off together —"

"It is not possible!"

"But under very different circumstances," continued Armyn. "Ordmore had resorted to the basest of tricks to deceive her. He had never ceased to love her, and was madly jealous of me. If she remained in Maryland her friends would protect her. If he could induce her to go away with him, half his object would be accomplished — and he in-

duced her to go away with him. Two days after the death of her mother he handed her a telegraphic despatch — he had found it at the railway station in passing, he said, and had brought it to her. It was signed with my name, and informed her that I was dying in a hospital in Missouri. If she wished to see me before I died, it would be necessary to come at once."

"What a wretch!"

"There is no exact word that describes this person," said Armyn; "but he is dead now, and all accounts are settled between us. Let me finish my story. Fanny went at once with him — he was going to the West himself on business, and would escort her, he said. They travelled together until they reached the village of Wabash, and then he coolly told her that he had deceived her. What followed was the last and crowning proof of the man's heartless vulgarity. He urged the young lady to marry him to preserve her reputation. They had been seen to go away together: if she returned unmarried her good name would be lost forever. The only course was to marry him, and return as Mrs. Ordmore."

"Good heavens! what a scoundrel! Of course she refused?"

"Without an instant's hesitation. He had completely misunderstood her character and her feeling for me. She replied by expressing her contempt for him, and turning her back upon him in utter disgust: and that was the end of her relations with Ordmore."

"Did she return?"

"No: the rest of her life was spent in Missouri. This arose from very simple circumstances. She was quite alone in the world. Her mother had been only a tenant of the house in which they had lived, and she had nothing. The good woman to whose home she had been taken became extremely fond of her, and she remained with her until the time of her marriage."

"Her marriage?"

"To a Mr. John Maurice, who had lived in her own neighborhood in Maryland. This marriage was the result of circumstances, as a great many are. You remember our fight in Tennessee where I was wounded so badly. I was reported to be dead, and the item got into the newspapers. Fanny saw it, and from that moment lost all hope."

"Sad indeed!"

"Sadness is the rule in matters connected with war. Fanny's heart was nearly broken, — I follow her friend's account, — and she mourned for me as faithfully as if she had been my wife. But her temperament was naturally elastic; she was alone in the world, and craved love and sympathy. She married at length. Her husband was a former acquaintance, an honorable young man, but what is called unlucky. Failing in everything which he undertook at home, he had wandered away to the West. His family lost sight of him, and Fanny met him by mere accident. A few words will finish my long story now. He and Fanny were married,

and Fanchette was born. Then he went to New York to obtain employment, was taken ill, and died there soon afterwards. As I have said, it was on her way to rejoin her husband that my poor Fanny lost her life."

"A strange history!"

"Very strange, my dear Waring. The good people who believe that routine and commonplace only enter into life deceive themselves. The storm-wind is as certain as the blue days, if not so frequent. My own life has been a wandering one — my poor Fanny's was tragic. I need not tell you that all this affected me deeply — and the fate of Fanchette too."

"You mean to tell her?"

"Assuredly, and to see that she leaves the stage. It is natural that I should take the deepest interest in her. I should do so for her mother's sake. The sight of her touches me inexpressibly. You would understand that if you had ever seen her mother. The likeness is strange beyond words — to the least trifle. She has, above all, my poor Fanny's bright hair and beautiful smile."

Armyn uttered a deep sigh, and rose.

"You now know everything, my dear Waring," he said. "I have discovered that this young girl is the daughter of the woman I loved, and I shall make it my business to see that her future life is happy, as far as I can. I shall not see her again, as I am about to leave the country, and she will never know until I am dead that she owes anything

to me. There is time enough. I have already devised my plan. I am glad you are her friend. I wish you were even more to her. In a word, I wish you would marry her. Think of it. — There is Montrose — the house on the hill."

CHAPTER XIX.

ONE OF THE MYSTERIES OF MONTROSE.

DURING this long conversation the yacht had tacked about, and sailing close to the wind, was making its way northward.

Long strips of silver sand; a chain of wooded bluffs cut here and there by ravines or roads; the sloping *champagne* beyond — this was the quiet and charming landscape which Waring gazed at with rapture.

"Montrose" on its lofty hill seemed to dominate all, and the graceful tower, rising from one end of the mansion, had the airiest of effects. The whole view of land and water, of sky and tree, was exquisite. The limpid atmosphere, just softened by a golden haze, suffered the eye to distinguish every detail — the fringes of foliage, the level reaches of white sand where the waves broke in a monotonous murmur, the white façade of the country house, the slender tower, and the far expanse of field and forest beyond. Mr. Waring, gazing at this quiet scene, more than ever congratulated himself on his escape from cities.

The yacht steadily drew near the long line of

heights below the hill, and Waring soon distinguished cavernous openings beneath the gnarled roots, hollowed out by the waves of the Chesapeake. Through a depression in the bluffs a narrow roadway descended to a small wharf, and the yacht approached it, brushing the overhanging foliage as she passed beneath. Then a rope was thrown, the little vessel veered round, and Armyn, leaping ashore, led the way up the narrow road.

Ten minutes afterwards the friends were in full view of the Montrose house. It was imposing, and had every mark of age. The tower alone seemed to be a modern addition. The light stone of which the house was built, gave it an airy appearance in spite of its solidity, and the grounds were extensive and admirably cared for. In front was a circular carriage-way, and from the gravel two or three stone steps led to a terrace with a floor of flags, a stone balustrade, and urns at intervals.

All about the mansion was ancient and unpretending. The large door was surmounted by plain triangular panes in heavy frames. Within, the hall was panelled in oak, with not too much carving; the furniture was old and solid; the contrast with cities was complete.

"So this is Montrose!" Waring exclaimed; "grand, gloomy and peculiar, like the proprietor."

"What an idea!" said Armyn: "your adjectives are absurdly out of place, dear Waring. There is absolutely nothing either grand or gloomy or peculiar about my old house, which is a plain country

residence like a thousand others. The only approach to grandeur is the name *Montrose;* but that was given it, I have always heard, from the number of wild roses growing on the hill."

"No matter," Waring said, "don't make things too prosaic. I am in the realm of poesy and romance. Look at that tower! I can fancy some old alchemist or sorcerer shut up there. And then those remote apartments in yonder gable! Does Mariana reside there? I refer to the maiden of the moated grange."

"What a fancy! I thought you knew there were none of the fair sex at Montrose. But I am mistaken. There is one."

"A woman?"

"I thought I had mentioned Miss Milly."

"Miss Milly? A real woman? Is there actually a female inmate in this mysterious establishment? A female? If convenient, I should like to return at once. Signal the yacht to take me on board. No females, Armyn!"

"This one is not dangerous. She is only my housekeeper. And here she is. — How do you do, Miss Milly? I am very glad to see you."

A portly woman of about sixty, with a ruddy and pleasant face, came out with a keg basket on her arm.

"Mr. Armyn! So you are back!" exclaimed Miss Milly, shaking the hand Armyn held out.

"And I have brought my old friend Mr. Waring, Miss Milly."

Miss Milly smiled, and made Waring a courtesy; after which she retired, and the friends went into the drawing-room. It was a large apartment with very old furniture, a broad fireplace with huge brass andirons, and a number of family portraits suspended from hooks in the heavy moulding of the cornice. All about the apartment was antique, and quite delighted Waring. He had a taste for *bric-à-brac*, and saw around him what highly gratified it — chairs with carved backs, tables with twisted legs, a screen of worsted-work, and some vases on the tall mantelpiece which seemed to have come out of the ark.

"I like your house of all things, Armyn," he said — "especially the crooked legs of your tables, and your brass andirons. My tastes are a harmonious blending of the antique and the æsthetic. You will divine one of these days the unspeakable charm of *bric-à-brac*."

"I have escaped that passion — busy men have no time for it," said Armyn; "at least I have not."

"I could spend the rest of my existence with serene delight in this humble cottage," observed Mr. Waring, looking around him.

"Without a companion?"

"You mean a wife — no, I thank you; none for me."

"What a cynic!"

"Or philosopher — no dear angel shall ever noose me."

"But consider — one grows lonely. Books be-

come tedious: one longs for the sound of the human voice."

"The human voice is a good thing — if the voice is not a female's. I could stand the dear creatures if they did not chatter so. Oh me for a dumb angel! I would get down on my knees and adore her!"

Armyn laughed in his quiet fashion, and said, —

"I am sorry not to be able to gratify you. Suppose you try one of the portraits yonder — it might step down from the wall."

"You are right. All things are possible in this enchanted castle; I will discover its mysteries. I am sure there are secret passages and mysterious inhabitants. I am a romance-writer, and propose to write the 'Mysteries of Montrose.'"

An old servant appeared at the door with a silver waiter under his arm, and the friends went to dinner. It was served in a large dining-room, with furniture of solid mahogany, and Miss Milly presided as the lady of the house. After dinner they went out to the terrace, and Waring, smoking with tranquil enjoyment, looked with admiration at the landscape. The sun was slowly setting beyond the waters of the Chesapeake. The birds were twittering in the foliage, and the leaves whispered in a light breeze. A white sail glimmered at times on the vague expanse, and then the sun disappeared in a blaze of orange fading away into an exquisite green.

"What a landscape!" cried Waring; "if Mont-

rose were mine I would never leave it. Why weary yourself with cities, Armyn — with business and secret plottings? — which reminds me that you have not kept your promise."

"What promise?"

"To tell me all about your — well, your *mission* in this favored country."

"You have threatened me with discovering it by your unaided intelligence."

"I retract."

"Another suggestion. Ask my friend."

"Your friend?"

"Listen!" said Armyn, smiling, and holding up his finger. In fact, slow and measured steps were heard descending the staircase leading up into the tower. Then the steps approached, the rustle of a robe was heard, and a strange figure made its appearance and stood framed in the lofty doorway.

It was the figure of a benignant old man with thin gray hair and a long white beard — a man of very tall stature, and wrapped in a yellow robe which fell around him like the trappings of an emperor.

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. Waring, dropping the hand holding his cigar. Armyn rose and said, smiling, —

"The mysterious inhabitant of the enchanted tower!"

CHAPTER XX.

IMPRESSIONS OF A PRINCE.

AT the moment when Mr. Waring lost his self-possession at sight of the figure in the yellow robe, Prince Seminoff, in a handsome dressing-gown, and smoking a cigar, was writing a letter to a friend — Count Pulski, one of his intimates in Paris. He wrote in French and at considerable length. A few extracts will afford an idea of the gay good humor of this calumniated subject of his paternal Majesty the Czar:

"They call it their National Capital, *mon cher*. It is a *bizarre* place, I swear to you, and the society is of the most pretentious conceivable. Republicanism here is what republicanism is everywhere. Shall I add, to emphasize my meaning, that it is *opera bouffe* without the music of Offenbach or the *esprit?* You would laugh to kill yourself if you were to see the phantasmagoria! All is unreal; and remember this, — it is your friend who tells you, — *the whole will vanish some day!* It is sure to do that. The time even approaches. This rule of the mob, called Republicanism, is a wild delusion.

What will come to it is the strong hand to take control of this chaos — have we not seen that in the case of *belle France*, rescued from anarchy by the firm pressure of his late Majesty Napoleon III.? I swear to you the strong hand is necessary here. I say to you again that all is unreal and of yesterday. On the avenues a crowd of people rushing to and fro — hurried movement, eager faces, a great multitude 'with axes to grind,' as the eccentric American phrase is: splendid equipages, fine dresses, rogues, demireps, all the froth of a new society, which looks at money as the *summum bonum* — so different from the settled order of things and respect for rank seen in Europe, above all in our dear Russia! I contemplate this pageant of *les nouveaux riches* with interest. It flashes, rolls along, shines in the sun, and is going to vanish. I give it five years. Then the world will behold a very different order of things. The country will be ruled by a firm and wise authority. To this chaos and glitter, this mushroom pretension and rush of new people ignorant of the rules of good society, will succeed the charming repose, the social subordination and regulated order, so notable under the Second Empire. The time, I repeat, is near. I look forward to it with interest. It is even probable that, in a certain contingency, your friend will become a citizen of this favored land.

"Do you ask me what that means? I reply that your friend is about to be married to a *belle Americaine*, and become a respectable head of family —

un homme rangé. There is no longer any doubt that the affair will take place, and mademoiselle is the fortunate possessor, or will be, of the pretty little sum of a million roubles. Some little difficulties occurred, but they have been surmounted: a fancied attachment to a *jeun amant*—the agitations of inexperience,—in a word, the slight barriers which make a conquest *piquante*. But *Madame la mère* was my friend, and they are all surmounted. Mademoiselle has ended by contemplating the affair with philosophy. My nuptials will take place in one week from this time; and then I shall see my dear Pulski in *belle Paris*.

"You will ask, perhaps, why your friend, the least-enchanted hitherto of all men with the idea of matrimony, thinks of indulging in that hazardous amusement. The response is easy. You are aware of the financial operations in which your friend is engaged, in which, having his whole confidence, you may be said, *mon cher* Pulski, to be a participator. The affair is tolerably safe. I may say that the elements of success combine at this moment in such a manner as to make failure nearly impossible. But then there is always, and in all things, the *possibility* of failure. And then? Alas! your friend would be thrown on the cold world without a rouble! That is not to be thought of! In the event of so unfortunate a termination of operations, what could be more agreeable than to have a refuge for one's old age—a retreat, an humble cottage, a *chaumière* with a 'brown-stone front,' as they say

in this favored country, and a few resources in the shape of *billets de banque?* All things happen — is it not? It is well to provide for the future days — they may cloud over. A modest competence is necessary to the simple wants of your friend; and by marrying Mademoiselle Delancy he secures that. In the melancholy event of a financial *crash*, as they say in this great country, your friend will contemplate his misfortunes with philosophy, and even summon, as he embarks on the *paquebot* of the ocean, sufficient of lightheartedness to chaunt *Partant pour l'Amèrique!*

"I have not said that his Excellency the Baron has kindly permitted me to visit my estates without delay. This permission is in accordance with the views of his Majesty, whose paternal care is extended over all his subjects. I shall soon have the pleasure, therefore, of presenting you to Madame; and as she will probably remain in Paris for some time, you will make her full acquaintance. She is charming, and I quite shrink from taking her to Russia at this moment. It will be better to precede her there and arrange for her reception. We shall probably have a pleasant voyage. The weather is charming. Only one thing annoys me: the firm opposed to our financial operations has taken the precaution to have my movements watched by a confidential employé on the route. But that is *en règle*, of course, and will not embarrass your friend. I think I have already observed this so agreeable personage, this obliging travelling-com-

panion, covertly viewing me from behind trees on the avenues and boulevards, and I even fancy I recognize an old acquaintance, one of my dear countrymen.

"I entrust these little details of our financial affairs to paper without apprehension. The French authorities are not curious about postal matters, and have none of that solicitude on the subject which characterized our dear Duc de Morny; and then we have no secrets — is it not so, *mon cher* Pulski? *Au revoir!* I quite long for *belle Paris* and the boulevards. I shall see them soon, and you will laugh when you behold your friend, since you will behold seated beside him *Madame la Princesse.*"

The Prince did not sign this note.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT BAYSIDE.

BAYSIDE was a handsome country house on the shore of the bay, some miles from Montrose. It stood in the midst of green fields, and presented a very attractive appearance. A winding carriage drive ran through the grounds, in which a flock of sheep with their young lambs were grazing; and across this green expanse, which was nearly level, rose the house, a building with wings, and a verandah with fluted pillars encircled by flowering creepers. In the circle in front was a wicker-work basket overflowing with spring blooms, and a flower border beneath the verandah exhibited marks of the most loving attention. Within, the house was bright and homelike. Everywhere could be seen the indications of a refined taste—the taste of a woman. No man could ever have surrounded himself with the exquisite trifles on stand and etagère. The presiding genius of the establishment was evidently of the feminine sex.

In fact, Bayside was the creation of Mrs. Delancy. She did not like the capital, and was always glad to leave it for the country. Its scenes of fashion

and frivolity wearied her. She was never so happy as when the winter was over and she could pack up her trunks and take refuge once more among her dear trees and flowers.

It would be saying too much to declare that Colonel Delancy fully shared his wife's enthusiasm. He was much fonder than herself of the life of cities. He was accustomed to say that people calumniated the capital. There were dull or disagreeable persons there, as there were in all cities; but then, if you only knew where to look for it, there was no better society. It was much the most agreeable that he had found in any city, and had only to be sought with discrimination.

When, however, Mrs. Delancy began to sigh, and look at the budding trees in front of their town house in the spring, the Colonel always knew what was coming. They were going to return to Bayside. The spring *nostalgia* of the lady had seized upon her, and he was much too devoted a husband to interpose any obstacles. As this May approached, Mrs. Delancy had exhibited the customary symptoms. The Colonel had sighed, but in due time they were at Bayside.

It was a sorrowful business to train the flowers formerly the care of Louise; and more than once Mrs. Delancy found herself crying quietly as she thought of her poor child. She and Colonel Delancy had made every effort to persuade Mrs. Ordmore not to insist upon the marriage of Louise and Prince Seminoff. The interviews were painfully

affecting, but resulted in nothing. It is a very hard task, indeed, to touch the heart of a heartless person; and Mrs. Ordmore was as near an approach to that character as human nature admits of. She replied with immense hauteur that she was competent to manage her own daughter's affairs; and Colonel and Mrs. Delancy had gone away to their house at Bayside in a state of the deepest melancholy.

It was sad to have to grieve so in the midst of the spring sunshine.

"If our poor little Louise would only come back we should be happy again!" sighed the poor old Colonel, wearily passing his hand over his gray side-whiskers.

This was said one evening when he and Mrs. Delancy were seated on the verandah about twilight, looking sadly out on the fields and woods covered with the fresh green of spring. The odor of flowers came from the borders on the mild evening wind. The birds were chirping as they nestled down in some tall elms growing near the gate; and the whole Bayside domain was sinking slowly into a homelike repose.

"If she could only come back!" sighed Colonel Delancy. "If they would not marry her to that man! It is terrible; but what can we do? — what can we do, my dear? I wish you would tell me. Women are a great deal more intelligent than men."

Colonel Delancy fully believed this, and made no

scruple of expressing his opinion. There never was a greater blunder, he often said, than to suppose that women were intellectually weak. Only boys and fools had any such opinion. The difference between the sexes was a difference of kind, not degree, and the advantage, he thought, was on the side of the women. Men reasoned painfully, and very often in a blundering manner, while women reached their conclusions at a bound. An instinct guided them which was much better than logic, and their conclusions were almost invariably just. Sometimes his judgment dissented from Mrs. Delancy's, but he said to himself that experience had demonstrated one thing — that she was almost always in the right. He made no secret of this. He said, "I am a man of the world and have seen a great deal, my dear; but your judgment is better than mine, and I wish you would tell me what to do." When people laughed and said, "You are ruled by your wife, Colonel," he replied, "Yes, I am: it is one of the most creditable traits of my character — I advise you to cultivate it." And singularly enough, it sometimes happened that certain married men of his acquaintance to whom he thus spoke, would have done much better to have followed his advice.

Unfortunately, on the present occasion poor Mrs. Delancy could suggest nothing. Her melancholy was, if possible, more profound than Colonel Delancy's. She had never ceased reproaching herself for her coldness to Mrs. Ordmore at her own recep-

tion, and for not attending the reception of that lady afterwards. She was not really to blame, but she could not persuade herself of that fact. She had not meant that her bow to the lady in the alcove should be cold, only ceremonious; and she had been prevented from going to Mrs. Ordmore's reception at the last moment by a violent attack of neuralgia. This she had explained afterwards, but Mrs. Ordmore did not believe her; and now the poor lady was bitterly reproaching herself for that ceremonious courtesy and her neuralgia.

The conversation continued on the verandah almost in monosyllables. These poor people were very unhappy. The sun had sunk, and in their dreary mood seemed to them to have taken away the light of hope with it. Colonel Delancy at last rose and went slowly into the house. He was tired as well as depressed. He had been riding over his estate all day to dissipate his melancholy, and bodily fatigue now led him to go and doze on his favorite sofa in the drawing-room — one of his habits about twilight. Mrs. Delancy remained seated on the verandah for some moments, and then, feeling utterly lonely, resolved to go and write to Louise.

She had written to her once or twice, but had received no reply. It was probable that Mrs. Ordmore had something to do with that circumstance. Mrs. Delancy had accordingly given up the attempt in despair, but could not resist the passionate desire at this moment to make a new effort. There

was the possibility at least that her letter would reach its destination. She accordingly went into the drawing-room, took her writing-desk from the table, and opening it, balanced it upon her knees and began to write. There was still enough light, although dusk was near. The orange light of evening filtered through the lace curtains sweeping down to the right and left from the delicate gilt cornice above the window; and half concealed behind this light cloud, with her back turned to the verandah in order that the light might fall over her shoulder, Mrs. Delancy began to write to Louise.

There was something very charming in the little home interior — in the old-fashioned mantelpiece; the brass andirons, as brilliant as gold, rising in front of the simple fire-screen, representing a boy on a white pony; in the portraits on the wall gradually fading in the dusk; and the fresh flowers in the vase on the centre-table filling the whole room with perfume. Nothing was heard but the long breathing of old Colonel Delancy, who was taking his nap on the sofa in a far corner, the slow movement of the lady's pen, which seemed in unison with her sadness, and the rustle of the leaves of the great trees growing a few feet from the verandah, which they brushed with their spring foliage.

Mrs. Delancy wrote on in the fading light, and bending low over her desk in order to see, had entirely forgotten where she was. She was not at Bayside now, but far away, with a girl on a cricket at her feet looking up into her face She had for-

gotten that the delicate hand holding the pen was engaged in writing. With this hand she was caressing the auburn hair of her child — her child who was leaning upon her knees and looking up at her out of her great blue eyes. She saw this picture so clearly, and was so far away from Bayside, that she naturally did not hear a light step on the gravel without. It is very difficult to dream of distant faces and scenes, and realize at the same moment what is actually going on around one; and thus Mrs. Delancy did not even hear the step on the verandah now, or see the shadow of a figure which ran toward her in the fading light.

"Mama!"

She started up, dropping the desk, which rolled upon the floor. She and Louise were clasped close to each other in a long embrace full of sobs and happy tears.

"My own Louise!"

"I have come home, mama! They shall not take me away from you! Where is papa?"

Colonel Delancy had started up, and a moment afterwards was holding the girl in his arms and covering her with kisses. Then a multitude of questions, of exclamations, of joyful outcries, filled the room; in the midst of which Tom Winter came in and bowed with his mild air to Colonel and Mrs. Delancy.

Bayside was a very happy house that evening, for the very portraits on the wall seemed to take part in the general joy. Louise soon told her story.

She had resolved, she declared, that she would never marry Prince Seminoff, and as the best means of avoiding it had determined to leave her mother's if she could possibly do so It would be difficult, as she was watched closely; but her maid had proved her friend. She had not hesitated to entrust the girl with a note for Mr. Winter: he had duly received it, and then nothing remained but to succeed in leaving the house without being discovered. Her first plan had been to steal away toward morning, but the maid dissuaded her: they would be overheard, as it was impossible to unlock the great door without noise. It would be better to go away in the afternoon, when Mrs. Ordmore was driving out, and the housekeeper, who watched, was taking her nap. This plan had been executed with perfect success. Louise walked down-stairs and out of the house without attracting anybody's attention. The maid followed her after a moment, saw her join Mr. Winter at the spot agreed upon, and then they hastened to the train, embarked upon it, and reaching the station had walked to Bayside.

It was a joyful night. Not much of it was passed in sleep. The babble of happy voices filled the old homestead with music; and Louise, standing erect with her arm around Mrs. Delancy, said in her mild voice, —

"I am home, now, mama, and they shall not take me from you again."

There was something convincing in the very tones of the brave young voice; but poor old Colonel

Delancy was almost frightened at his own happiness. A chill invaded him when he thought of Mrs. Ordmore and Prince Seminoff, who were very dangerous adversaries.

Tom Winter returned to the city by the morning train, and Colonel Delancy, making a grand effort of magnanimity in favor of his rival in the affections of Louise, invited him to come and visit them. Then, summoning all his fortitude, he turned his back on the young people as they took leave of each other, and Tom Winter got into the carriage and departed.

CHAPTER XXII.

PRINCE SEMINOFF'S IDEA.

WHEN Mrs. Ordmore returned from her drive and discovered the astounding fact that Louise was not in her chamber, the truth suddenly flashed upon her. The ungrateful girl had fled from her own mother! She had no doubt taken refuge at Bayside, and defied her authority. Mrs. Ordmore fell into a fit of rage at the thought, and sent a message to Prince Seminoff, requesting him to come and see her without delay.

The Prince came promptly, and Mrs. Ordmore indulged in bitter denunciations. She had been treated with shameful ingratitude. Her maternal authority had been laughed at! That hateful Mrs. Delancy had secretly arranged the whole affair. Louise would never have had the audacity to plan and execute such a scheme. She should repent it, repent it bitterly. She would assert her authority and reclaim her daughter, if it cost half her fortune.

The interview was long, and the Prince listened with an air of deep reflection. The legal recourse did not seem to impress him as the best method of proceeding. He said very little, permitting Mrs.

Ordmore's fury to expend itself. Then he stated his own views with coolness and precision. It would be necessary, he said, to *carry Louise off*. Such an attempt might seem desperate, but it was easier of accomplishment than people supposed. It was very common in Russia, and there really was no reason why it should not be resorted to in this country, where money was quite as effective as in any other. Should he have recourse to his plan? It was entirely feasible. The marriage might then take place in a quiet manner. He and his bride would sail for Europe. The whole matter would blow over. It would be impossible to inflict a legal penalty on *a husband* for taking possession of *his wife*. It would be absurd.

Mrs. Ordmore was dazzled; but, angry as she was, she saw the difficulty and danger of such a proceeding. It would be impossible to carry off Louise, she said — she would certainly be watched, and there was no hope of such a thing. She would consult with a confidential person, who would advise her. And when the Prince took his departure, still in deep reflection, she sent for the person to whom she had alluded. He was a very cool and prosaic man of the law, in whom Mrs. Ordmore reposed perfect confidence. When he was informed of the Prince's suggestion, he shrugged his shoulders. These foreigners, he said, never could be brought to understand that America was a country where the authority of the law was paramount. Such wild projects might be possible in other coun-

tries, but they would very soon be put a stop to here by a constable. It was absurd to think of kidnapping anybody. There had been already a plain case, however, of kidnapping, and Colonel Delancy, who was the kidnapper, could be forced to restore Miss Delancy. To kidnap any one was a misdemeanor, and was punished by fine and imprisonment. It would only be necessary to institute legal proceedings, and the law would return Miss Delancy to her mother and inflict the legal penalty on her abductors.

This sound advice made its impression on the furious lady. Leaning back in her rich mourning dress, and biting her nails, she knit her brows and reflected. How long a time would the legal process consume? she asked. About one month, was the reply.

"Then begin — begin at once!" she cried.

"I will do so, madam."

The bell rang, and Prince Seminoff entered as Mrs. Ordmore's counsel retired.

As the man of law reached the street he glanced at the handsome equipage of the Prince which stood in front of the door. A man wrapped in a cloak was leaning back in one corner of the vehicle, hid from view nearly, and apparently waiting for the Prince's return.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE "MYSTERIOUS INHABITANTS."

WHEN Mr. Waring, journalist, and ardent hunter of the picturesque, turned round on the Montrose terrace, and saw the tall figure in the yellow robe, he fixed his eyes on the eccentric personage with an air of imbecile wonder. Who was he? He scanned him attentively. The yellow robe was confined at the waist by a broad belt covered with cabalistic signs, which might have been Hebrew, or Egyptian, or Persian. Suspended around the owner's neck by a chain resembling bronze, a curiously shaped jewel gave back the last rays of sunset. In the expression of the old man's features, however, there was nothing whatever that was mysterious or peculiar. His eyes were large and mild, his whole air very modest and deferential. He had bowed profoundly, in a manner evidently meant to express respect. He was plainly not a charlatan; but he was no less a mystery and the puzzle of puzzles.

He remained standing in the doorway for a moment, and exchanged a few grave words with Armyn, who addressed him with marked respect.

What they said was a mystery to Waring, as they spoke in a language entirely unknown to him. He could see, however, that his host was alluding to him, since the patriarch looked at him with an expression of mild interest. This glance was very friendly, and was accompanied by a second inclination of his tall person. He then slowly went back in the direction from which he had come.

Waring sank back, apparently overcome.

"One of the mysterious inhabitants!" he said. "Good heavens! Have I entered the cavern of the Arabian Nights? Was that a real man, or only a figment of the brain?"

"Why not attempt to discover for yourself?" said Armyn, laughing.

"A patriarch of the orient — ? Am I to believe my eyes?"

"I don't see why you should not. They seem to be excellent eyes."

"Was this — this — most respectable-looking old fellow a real being, or was he a vision of the night? I merely ask for information."

"I decline to reply. You seem to forget that you defied me to have any mysteries — or at least to conceal them from you."

"I did — miserable man that I am! But I repent me of my arrogance. I take back all my boasts. Who is our mutual friend?"

"That is very bad English — you should say our common friend."

"How can I? — he is so devilish uncommon! Come, tell me about him, Armyn!"

"I decline to do so: as I am a mystery, make your own discoveries!"

"Well, that's what I call friendship — to leave a friend and guest to perish in slow agony from ungratified curiosity. Who *is* the old fellow?"

"What irreverence! His name is Anonda, and he is the mysterious inhabitant of the enchanted tower! He has gone to watch the stars, — and that reminds me that you must be tired."

"I am not in the least tired."

But for all that, Mr. Waring after a while began to yawn slightly, when Armyn conducted him to his chamber. As they parted with each other, Waring exclaimed, —

"Who *is* that old boy?"

"Ask him," returned Armyn; "that is, if you speak Arabic."

The door closed, and Waring stretched himself luxuriously in an easy-chair. The apartment was the perfection of comfort: through the lofty windows shaded by lace curtains he could see the heavy foliage, and the moon, which had just risen, filled the night with its mellow splendor.

In spite of his yawns Waring was not sleepy, and he rose and looked out into the moonlight. Then he remembered that there was a balcony on the façade of the mansion; and opening his door he went toward it, and easily gained access to it by the lofty window reaching to the floor.

As he was about to emerge in the moonlight he glanced toward the tower, and suddenly stopped.

One of the widows was thrown up, and to Mr. Waring's profound astonishment a young lady was leaning from it. The light of the moon fell on her face and figure, and enabled him to make out every detail. She wore her night-dress buttoned to the neck and flowing in white folds; her hair was of an intense black, and her head was leaning on her hand — the arm bare to the elbow.

Mr. Waring did not ask himself if he was the victim of hallucination — the attractive picture was much too real. But he felt so completely bewildered that for a minute or so he was incapable of consecutive thought. Then he muttered, —

"After all, that wretch Armyn is too much for me! A venerable patriarch in a yellow robe, and a petite beauty in her *robe de nuit* by moonlight! The thing is too outrageous! Who on earth can she be?"

It was astounding; but there she was! — he could nearly make out the expression of the black eyes in the moonlight.

Mr. Waring was just beginning to reflect that this secret espial was highly improper, when he was saved the trouble of retiring by the young lady herself. She abruptly closed the window and disappeared — had she heard him move or seen his shadow? It was possible — she was certainly gone.

"Well," he muttered, returning slowly to his chamber, "here's a stunner! Who says the age is commonplace? The mysteries of Montrose are beginning in earnest!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEFEAT OF WARING.

WHEN Waring came down to breakfast, he walked like a man in a dream. Who was the mysterious maiden of the moonlight? Would Armyn tell him? It was tolerably certain that he would not. In a most unfortunate moment he had defied his friend to conceal anything from him; and though he meant to cross-examine him, it would probably prove useless.

Breakfast followed, presided over by Miss Milly behind the ancient service. Gray-haired servants glided about, and the large establishment was a model of comfort. Waring realized for the first time the full attractions of a ménage where all is hereditary, and master and servants are bound to each other by lifelong association.

Once out on the terrace with his dear cigar, the journalist said quietly, —

"By-the-bye, you have not told me about that respectable old party."

"To whom do you refer, my dear friend?" said Armyn, innocently.

"Oh bother! The patriarch. Why didn't he come down to breakfast?"

"He rarely makes his appearance — the habits of foreigners are different from our own, you know. His meals are served in his apartment. The wishes of a guest should, of course, be respected."

"A noble sentiment, and you are the prince of hosts! — but do tell me about him."

"There is very little to tell. Why not ask him yourself?"

"I would with pleasure if I spoke his lingo."

Armyn smiled, making no reply.

"I say, who is your mysterious patriarch? A Brahmin — a priest of Buddha?"

"Your are burning, as the children say."

"From the East?"

"Perhaps."

"What a man you are! — rather what a bundle of mysteries! What took you to the East? What conspiracy against the peace and happiness of some inoffensive government are you fomenting? Are you a Nihilist, an International, or an emissary of the Great Mogul? Who is your patriarch, and the maiden of the moonlight?"

Waring looked keenly at his friend as he uttered the last words.

"The maiden of the moonlight?" Armyn said with an air of surprise.

"Your low attempts at deception do not deceive me," said Mr. Waring with severity.

"Deception? What can you mean, my dear Waring?" asked Armyn, laughing.

"I mean that last night, after invoking pleasant

slumbers on your unworthy head, I retired to my virtuous couch, or rather to my apartment; but finding sleep fly my eyelids — see my last great romance — went out to enjoy the moonlight on the balcony."

"Indeed!"

"Then — let me be brief. While standing, wrapped in shadow, I glanced in the direction of the enchanted tower, when suddenly I was startled by —"

"What? The whoop of an owl? There are a number of them in the trees."

"By a maiden leaning out in the moonlight!"

"What an idea!"

"It was not an idea, it was a girl — I'll swear to her."

"You were dreaming!"

"I was wide awake, and beheld a real maiden of flesh and blood — a divine creature with long black hair, and such eyes! such eyes! I have never seen such eyes! She was leaning from the window and gazing at the moon. Who was she? This suspense is torture."

Armyn laughed.

"All fancy," he said. "The idea that there are any maidens at Montrose is perfectly absurd. The moonlight glimmer deceived you, of course — it was some shadow. Do you suppose that if I were honored by the presence of such a young lady as you describe she would have buried herself in her chamber? She would certainly have come down to

breakfast to meet as handsome a young fellow as yourself."

"Breakfast? It is a profanation! A girl with eyes like that to be associated with *breakfast!*"

"If she is a real maiden, why not?"

"She feeds on moonlight!"

"Like a friend of mine!"

"There she is!" Waring exclaimed, looking up at the tower. "I swear she passed that window!"

Indeed Armyn himself had chanced to be looking in the same direction, and a feminine figure had certainly appeared for an instant at the window of the tower.

"Who is she? — come, unbosom!" cried Waring; "deception is useless!"

"Well, I see it is impossible to conceal anything from you," said Armyn, innocently. His eyes had passed from the tower to the highway beyond the great gate, and he saw two persons approaching on horseback, though Waring did not, since his back was turned to them.

"You are absolutely certain that you saw your maiden of the moonlight?"

"As certain as that I am living — do tell me about her!"

"Why not? It is unpardonable to keep a friend in a state of such painful perplexity."

The two persons were at the gate, and Armyn added, —

"A few words will relieve your mind. Your beautiful maiden is — but who is coming to see us

this morning? Your arrival must have become known. That is surely Colonel Delancy and little Miss Louise!"

The visitors rode up the hill, and Waring uttered a groan of disappointment. As to Armyn, he was smiling with an air of triumph.

CHAPTER XXV.

ARMYN COMES TO THE RELIEF OF COL. DELANCY.

COLONEL DELANCY had ridden out for exercise with Louise, whose recent imprisonment had deprived her face of all color. On their ride they had met Armyn's servant on the way to the post-office — Armyn's arrival at Montrose had thus become known to them — and the Colonel resolved to ride in and see him.

They were very old friends, and Armyn's father had been Colonel Delancy's friend before him. The families, from the vicinity of the houses — it was only a few miles to Bayside — had always been intimate. Armyn had been to Colonel Delancy's a hundred times when he was a boy; and although his long absence had interrupted the old intimacy, it had not changed the relations of the persons. The old tradition of friendship between the Delancys and Armyns was unforgotten. Trees that grow slowly for a long time are not easily rooted up. The quiet man approaching middle age was still to Colonel Delancy the bright-faced boy whom he had known so well; and their meeting on this day was an extremely cordial one. Louise was a much

newer acquaintance, but Armyn was not a stranger. He had been to Bayside since his return from the East; she felt perfectly at her ease with him; and then she knew Mr. Waring well — he was the friend of Tom Winter. Thus the meeting of all parties was easy and friendly.

The Colonel and Louise dismounted and entered the house — it was curious to see how the old establishment seemed to brighten up at the girl's presence. She had lost her gloomy air, and regained the sunshine of her country childhood. She looked up at the portraits with her fresh smile, and the old people in ruffles and low-necked dresses seemed to smile on her in response, and welcome her. While Colonel Delancy and Armyn conversed on the terrace, Louise and Mr. Waring talked about Tom Winter in the drawing-room. She was leaning back in her riding-habit, which defined her graceful figure, a faint flush and smile on the quiet young face, and Mr. Waring half reclined in his lazy fashion on the sofa beside her.

This woman-hater dearly loved the society of women, and by no means carried into practice his theories on the subject of the sex. He had often been laughed at for this diversity in precept and practice. But then his answer was always ready. He was a student of human nature, he said, with a view to dramatic composition: a drama or novel without women would be a dull affair; and in order to delineate their wiles in a natural manner it was necessary to study them. As this was quite trans-

parent, however, and deceived nobody, it did no harm; and the fair friends of Mr. Waring took the liberty of quietly laughing at a man who, denouncing women, continued to pass more than half of his leisure moments in their society. If he was hostile to the claims of the sex to regard, it was obvious that he carried out the scriptural injunction, and loved his enemies; and instead of regarding the journalist as a frigid critic, Miss Louise Delancy evidently had the greatest regard for him, and placed the utmost confidence in his good-nature.

In fifteen minutes he knew all about everything — Louise's sojourn with her mother, Tom Winter's interposition, and the flight to Bayside. Louise, poor girl, found a secret pleasure in talking with *his* friend. Tom Winter's name was scarcely once mentioned, but then "he" answered as well; and in some manner "he" was the chief topic.

Meanwhile Colonel Delancy and Armyn were engaged in earnest conversation on the terrace. The Colonel spoke without reserve of Louise and her affairs. When the mind is occupied by a possessing thought, the thought is apt to rise to the lips; and nothing was more natural than that Armyn should know all that affected the old friends of his family. He listened to the story, of which he already knew a good deal through Waring, with close attention.

"I know Prince Seminoff perfectly well," he said. "He is a man of considerable ability, but entirely without principle, and I have no doubt

that his views in regard to this marriage are wholly mercenary, as he is a ruined man."

"He is a member of the Nihilist Society, I hear from my friend the Russian Minister," the Colonel said; "but unfortunately that fact is not sufficient to base opposition to the marriage upon, even if we could oppose it."

The Colonel looked very much depressed as he said this.

"I suppose they will resort to legal proceedings," he added; "and then how could we resist them?"

Armyn reflected for a moment, and said, —

"I should be disposed to doubt that — if there were other means. The scandal would be disagreeable. I do not think Prince Seminoff would like to have public attention attracted to him if he could avoid it."

"But how could they ever get possession of Louise without legal proceedings? It is impossible."

"Everything is possible with a Cossack like Seminoff, my dear friend," said Armyn. "I do not wish to alarm you, but I know a great deal about this class of persons — they are not like Americans. Prince Seminoff comes from a country where things are looked at in a different light. What Americans would regard as perfectly absurd, appears to such men perfectly practicable."

"Is it possible that you mean —?"

"I mean, my dear Colonel Delancy, that if I

were in your place I would be on my guard against a man coming from a country where abduction is a common practice."

"Abduction!"

"The word startles you, I see. I do not know that Prince Seminoff has any such designs. But I know that he is not at all too good to have them."

"But the law! He would be arrested!"

"If you could trace it to him, no doubt. But, believe me, this man is much too skilful a person to permit that. There are a great many ways of effecting an object without personally appearing in it, and Mrs. Ordmore's great wealth, now that her husband is dead, will be at the Prince's disposal, I suppose, if she too wishes to effect this marriage."

Colonel Delancy's head sank. These words filled him with the utmost terror.

"You really startle me!" he said. "Is this a possible danger? But I see that it is. I really do not know what I am to do with Louise. I must leave home in a day or two, and Mrs. Delancy will accompany me. I do not wish to take Louise — the journey will be a sorrowful one, and the poor girl has had a great deal to make her melancholy of late. Mrs. Delancy's aunt, who lives in Kentucky, is dying, and has sent for her. I suppose I must take Louise to some friend in the city — but then, I cannot do that!"

"Assuredly not," said Armyn. "That would prove a most unfortunate step. Mrs. Ordmore

would certainly not neglect such an opportunity. Why not leave Miss Louise at Montrose, my dear friend? Miss Milly and herself are old friends, you know, and she is very well acquainted with Mr. Waring."

The idea evidently took Colonel Delancy by surprise; but the more he thought of it, the more desirable it appeared.

"I am very much obliged," he said; "my mind would be quite at rest —"

"Then oblige me in turn — the Armyns and Delancys ought to oblige each other."

"I am sure Louise would enjoy her visit —"

— "What visit? The one this morning, papa?" said Louise coming to the door. "I am sure it has been delightful."

"Shall I leave you here for a few days?"

"You are laughing, papa. I am sure Mr. Armyn would become very tired of me."

"He says he will not."

And then Colonel Delancy explained everything. He could not leave her, he said, by herself at Bayside, and Mr. Armyn had invited her to come to Montrose.

"I shall like it very much indeed," said Louise, smiling and making Armyn a courtesy. "Miss Milly and myself are intimate friends, and I feel quite at home."

"Then all is arranged, and my mind is greatly relieved," said Colonel Delancy. "I will bring Louise over, and go away without any fear."

Half an hour afterwards the visitors mounted, and set out on their return to Bayside. Armyn and Waring were left to themselves again, and the journalist began a new attack about the moonlight maiden.

"It really is absurd," was Armyn's only reply. "Let us think and talk of something real — say a sail on the bay. Would you like it, my dear Waring?"

"The very thought infuses life into my pulses!"

"I am glad to hear it. Yonder is our little beauty, the yacht — she is waiting for us. As you are such a woman-hater, you are no doubt glad that the beauty is not flesh and blood. Then she has another virtue, which you no doubt value — she won't chatter."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE VALUE OF A HATCHET.

THE yacht was rising and falling with the long swell of the bay, and rested on the waves as lightly and gracefully as a leaf of the spring. The sunshine of the May morning struggling through a light fog, resembling the rose-tinted smoke of burning fields in autumn, made the white sails loom up in vast proportions, until their summits seemed nearly to reach the tops of the trees bending down from the wooded bluff. The least breath of wind made the budding leaves whisper, and a low sweet murmur came up from the beach. Where the fog now and then opened, permitting a glimpse of the sky to appear, the azure space was crossed at intervals by flocks of canvas-backs, flying in the shape of a baseless triangle, veering away as they approached the shore where instinct told them that enemies were lurking, or pointing their "head of column" toward some bluff which promised to shelter them from the wind impeding their advance. The surface of the water had a light-green tint: now and then the white horses appeared — it would be a day of days for yachting when the fog lifted, as it probably would do in an hour or two.

The yachtsmen were evidently pleased at the prospect of the excursion. They saluted with that air of cordiality and respect which denotes a good understanding. The two friends leaped on board, the gang-plank was drawn in, and half turning round, the yacht, with her fore-and-aft sails filling suddenly in the wind, plunged her cutwater into the waves, and headed for the open bay.

Waring and Armyn were seated in the forequarter, and gave themselves up to idle enjoyment. To one of them, an amateur sailor, there was probably more enjoyment than novelty; but with the journalist there was the added charm of the perfect contrast which the scenes around him presented to his ordinary life. He, the victim of Newspaper Row, was out on the free water! There were no telegraphic despatches or last items to hunt him up and demand with inexorable pertinacity his attention. He had left all that behind him, and laughed with a sense of triumph. The news from Europe, the possible nominee of the National Convention, the personal explanation on the floor of Congress, and all the turmoil and worry, had faded away with the fading shore.

"Glorious! glorious!" exclaimed the journalist, looking at a sea-gull with white wings skimming the waves; "how old are you, Armyn?"

"I am nearly forty."

"Poor old man! I'm sixteen — or perhaps it's only twelve. The family Bible is not at hand. Why didn't I turn sailor instead of a miserable newspaper man?"

"It is my passion — the water, and I can sympathize with you," Armyn said; "but then I am a solitary man, and you are a man of society."

"If you are solitary it is your own fault, my boy. You ought to provide yourself with a resource against that."

"You mean — ?"

"A wife and children. *I* don't want any, but you would like the encumbrance, I rather think."

Armyn shook his head.

"The sight of children always touches me," he he said; "but a man can't marry without loving some one: — *you* should marry."

"And be talked to death! No, I thank you. I can stand a woman's tongue in broken doses; but to have to listen to it from morning to night would land me in a lunatic asylum."

"All women are not such terrible talkers — are they? There is your maiden of the moonlight. You have not heard her utter a word, and she would just suit you!"

This allusion aroused all Mr. Waring's dormant curiosity, and he assailed his friend with questions, and protests against his silence. It was all in vain, and at last he gave up in despair.

"My conviction," he said, "is that you are hiding your black-eyed beauty, Armyn. You propose to marry her yourself."

"What an idea! Marry a shadow? I should prefer a being of flesh and blood to a gleam of moonlight."

"I swear I saw her, and I believe the fate in store for her is to become Madame Armyn."

"There will be no Madame Armyn. I have no desire to marry."

"Woman-hater!"

"I am far from being a woman-hater, my dear Waring — very far, indeed, and am convinced that women are superior to men in a hundred ways."

"Don't let the idea get out, — it would be dangerous; and then it is a heresy!"

"It is true. They are more unselfish. They have more patience, more endurance, and more delicacy of perception, moral and intellectual. Mr. Arnold informs us that they are weak creatures, who really like 'stern strength and promise of control;' but then their own strength, whether it is stern or not, is often stronger than a man's."

"A eulogy of the sex!"

"Why not? — so many weak people laugh at them. They deserve an appreciative word now and then from us superior people. Of course, in the battle of life man must take command; but brain and muscle are the forces of battle — moral force is stronger."

"That is, woman's, you mean?"

"Certainly. Do you want a proof of it? With advancing age men grow *sour* and hard — women almost always mellow. Can your count among your male acquaintances many who live up to the great precept of the French poet I quoted to you one day, — '*Non pour nous seul, mais pour tous*

nous naissons.' I have known a great many human beings in lace caps, wearing spectacles and knitting stockings, who habitually did so. Well, that is better than living for one's self, is it not?"

"Yes, it is," said Waring. "Why don't you try to imitate your angels in the lace caps?"

"I do," said Armyn, quietly.

"Explain."

"It would be a long story, and I really feel too idle to-day to talk. There is nothing that plunges me in such profound indolence as this steady movement of a craft without rolling or pitching Come and visit the East with me — we will smoke and dream in company."

"I believe I will."

"Are you in earnest? Something may take place there soon which will interest you."

"Well, I'd go to the very end of the world for a new item."

Armyn turned his head, and seemed to be listening.

"What is the matter?" said Waring.

Armyn listened more attentively.

"The matter is," he said, quickly, "that I think you are about to be supplied with the item."

"What do you mean? What are you listening to?"

Armyn rose with a bound, and rushed to the bow of the yacht. At the same moment Waring distinguished cries through the fog, and the dull sound of paddles. The cries were the single word "Help!"

"An accident!" Waring exclaimed, leaning over the gunwale, and endeavoring to look through the fog. Armyn did not reply. He had gone to the helm and given an order. A few moments afterwards he came back to Waring. He was in his shirt and pantaloons only, with a sailor's belt around his waist, in which a hatchet was thrust. In this guise, with his collar torn open to give more freedom to his movements, he was no longer the man of cities, but the sailor.

"There has probably been a collision in the fog," he said, "and that is always dangerous. Listen! — there is no doubt of it."

Cries for help came through the mist, and were nearer and louder.

"It is the Southern boat, I am afraid. We will see in a minute."

They saw very soon. The yacht had headed, by Armyn's orders, straight toward the sound, and a few moments afterwards ran alongside of a steamboat which was evidently sinking. On the deck figures were seen rushing to and fro in the wildest disorder. From the excited mass of men, women and children rose loud cries for help. A half-dismantled schooner seen dimly through the fog explained the whole. The boat had run down the smaller vessel, but in doing so had stayed in her own timbers and was filling.

At the moment when the yacht approached, the boat was settling, but very slowly. Why were not the small boats lowered? A glance explained

everything. From long disuse the tackles were fast in the blocks, and refused to move. Either from loss of self-possession or terror, the officers did not order them to be cut.

Armyn saw all at a single glance. The yacht was brought directly alongside of the boat, and lashed to it fore-and-aft by her cables. The gang-plank was then lowered, and Armyn leaped on the boat, pointing to the yacht, which a few moments afterwards was crowded with the passengers and crew. These had scarcely reached it when the boat began to pitch forward. Then the prow rose, and the rush of the water in the hull was heard. The boat was about to go down headforemost, and threatened to wreck the yacht.

Waring, looking at Armyn on the deck of the boat, and calling to him loudly to come back, now understood what the hatchet in his belt was for. It was impossible to throw off. The cables lashing the yacht to the boat must be cut. One of the yachtsmen by Armyn's orders had stationed himself at the cable in rear, and having satisfied himself that there were no other persons on board, Armyn made the signal.

The hatchets rose and fell on the cables, which twisted and cracked. The sinking boat was dragging the yacht down. In two minutes it would be too late. Suddenly Armyn's cable gave way, and the bow of the yacht recoiled, as if it were a living animal trying to get away; but the cable in rear remained, firmly lashing the little craft to the sinking boat.

Waring rushed to the stern and called to Armyn to leap and save himself; but his friend paid no attention to this excellent advice. He was aiding to cut the last cable; it was more than half in two; the boat made a great plunge, and the cable snapped — then slowly rising, the boat again plunged forward, the deck blew up, and a whirlpool full of floating objects marked the spot where the large hulk had sunk.

Waring was certain that his friend had gone down with the boat. His heart seemed to stand still, and this honest newspaper man shook from head to foot. As the moments went on he gave way to his anguish, and, careless of the crowd around him, sobbed like a child. All at once he felt a hand on his shoulder, and a voice said, —

"Here I am, my dear Waring. Did you think I went down? The fog must have blinded you — I got away, and climbed up by the bowsprit shrouds."

This moment, as Mr. Waring afterwards said, was the happiest of his life. He uttered a loud hurrah as he saw standing within two feet of him the drenched figure of his friend; and the crowd gathered around, scarcely realizing that they had really escaped death. Suddenly Waring drew out his note-book and began to write rapidly.

"What are you doing?" said Armyn.

"I'm ahead of the whole Row this time at least! Where is the nearest telegraph?"

His pencil began to race over the note-book which lay on the gunwale.

"That proves to me that something I have long suspected is true," said Armyn.

"'The cables cracked — the boat plunged forward — erect, a hatchet in his hand' — what is that you say, Armyn?"

"I say journalists are the real third division of humanity."

"'The cries were heartrending' — what do you mean?"

"That the world is divided into 'men, women and journalists.'"

"No time for discussion at the present moment! Is there a telegraph yonder?"

Waring pointed his pencil toward the houses of a little town on an indentation of the bay before them. The fog had by this time lifted, and the sun was shining brightly.

"Yes, a telegraph and railway station — a branch of the Eastern Shore Road."

"Railways are behind the age — the telegraph's the thing."

And Mr. Waring began again to write with the speed of a race-horse, bent plainly on getting ahead of the wide-awake Row.

The excitement of the crowd had steadily cooled. It is a very agreeable reflection that a great danger which threatened us has passed away. The yacht had headed toward the Eastern Shore, and was forging on steadily before a light breeze. Soon the town of Cambridge came in sight, where there was a railway station; and the nearly shipwrecked

crowd, having overwhelmed Armyn with thanks, requested him to put them ashore at the town. Half an hour afterwards the yacht reached the wharf and the passengers hurried on shore. Waring, who had returned to the cabin below and finished his notes, stood waiting impatiently for his opportunity to reach the telegraph office.

"A pleasing spectacle!" he said to Armyn; "look at that group of maidens yonder, draggled, dishevelled and in despair! Do you think they have lost some dear one? Not at all — they have lost their new bonnets! The cruel sea has swallowed up all their ribbands, and fixings generally. What an amount of human nature there is in this miserable world! I noticed that not one of this group of your superior order of beings thought of thanking the man who saved them from the fate of their new bonnets!"

"Well," said Armyn, "don't be too hard on your fellow-creatures — even if they *are* merely women! I wish I could have saved their finery — I could not, and there is an end of it. These are the last?"

"No, there are two other people in the cabin. I went down to finish my special, and have been trying to persuade them to come to Montrose with us."

"To come to Montrose? I shall be very glad to see them — no doubt they are friends of yours."

"Yes, they are — intimate friends. I don't know how I missed seeing them as they came on the yacht."

"I can tell you. You were looking for another friend of yours — you thought he had gone under."

"No doubt; but I have not mentioned another circumstance. The people in the cabin — I hear them coming up — are friends of your own also."

"Friends of *mine?* I did not recognize any."

"They had gone below before you got back from the boat."

"They are ladies, I suppose. Friends of mine? Who are they?"

"One, at least, is a lady."

"Who is she, Waring?"

"You can see for yourself."

Fanchette came up the cabin stairway and on deck with Papa Melville. The latter preserved his air of cordial dignity. As to Fanchette, who was dressed in a brown travelling-suit, with a small hat perched on her amber hair, she was rosy and laughing.

Armyn went forward quickly, holding out his hand, with a bright smile on his face.

"I am very glad to see you!" he said.

Fanchette laughed, and shook hands.

"I ought to be very glad to see you, as you saved me from being drowned!" she replied.

"Enough!" exclaimed Waring. "The appropriate speeches have been made! I'm off to the telegraph; but before I go, relieve my mind, Fanchette. You and Papa Melville are coming with us. The feudal pile in which we reside is only a few leagues distant. Arrange that, Armyn, ere my return — and do come, Fanchette!"

"You know how very welcome you and Mr. Melville will be," said Armyn.

"But — how can I visit anybody? I have no clothes!" said Fanchette, ruefully.

"No clothes? A bagatelle!" cried Waring. "We can supply you."

"Who is *we* — is there a Mrs. Waring?"

"I am happy to say there is not; but —"

"Ah, you mean Mrs. Armyn?"

"Good heavens! There is no Mrs. Armyn either. But there is a beautiful being of your own sex — is there not, Armyn? She lives in an enchanted tower, and has moonlight eyes and long hair. She has, doubtless, an extensive wardrobe also, though she had not availed herself to a great extent of it when I first beheld her. She will supply you, I have no doubt, with a large and varied assortment of pull-back dresses at the shortest notice. And then — if they don't fit, there is the wardrobe of an excellent old housekeeper. Present the argument in all its force, Armyn — you are the host — I am going to the telegraph office."

To make up for lost time, Mr. Waring rushed across the gang-plank, nearly overturning the dishevelled maidens on the shore, and disappeared. When he returned, in fifteen minutes, with an expression of deep relief, Armyn said, —

"Our friends will go and spend a night, at least, at Montrose."

At the word the yacht moved, gliding northward, before the light breeze. Fanchette was

standing on the deck, watching the receding shore. Her eyes danced, her lips were parted, and her long hair was blown backward on the fresh breeze. From her skirt emerged two small boots with tapering heels, which were set down firmly, and produced the impression that it would be unfortunate to have them placed upon one. Standing thus, with her slender figure relieved against the white sail behind her, Fanchette turned her head and looked at Armyn over her shoulder with the smile of a delighted child. Long afterwards he remembered the black eyes and the red lips.

Was she wondering at the curious shiftings of the scenes in real life? They were certainly singular. Montrose was going to catch Miss Louise Delancy, but before her arrival it was going to catch Miss Fanchette.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MAYA.

IT was nearly sunset, and Fanchette, seated in her chamber at Montrose, was looking around her with delight. The yacht had arrived an hour or two before, and she had been shown to this room by Miss Milly. Nothing could have been calculated to please a girl more. It was a bird's-nest, except that birds'-nests are not so large, or furnished in rosewood with Psyche mirrors. The windows were tall and brushed by green foliage; across the lawn and the slope beyond could be seen the tranquil surface of the bay; and as an oriole came at that moment and welcomed Fanchette from the summit of an oak, she decided that the contrast with a steamboat stateroom was charming.

She was still looking around her with the highest satisfaction, when Miss Milly, having knocked to announce her coming, came in. Now if Fanchette had been at liberty to select as a hostess the very personage of all others most agreeable to her, she would have chosen this smiling old dame. As Waring said, she was a very good girl — and she liked motherly people. She had not met with

many in her strange life of the stage; but she coveted such a friend and protector all the more, and especially at this particular time. Her French *bonne* had been detained by illness at Mobile; and it was a very great relief to have Miss Milly call her "my dear," in the most affectionate manner, as she did all young girls, and exhibit so much solicitude about her comfort. Girls like comfort and to be taken command of by elderly persons of their own sex. They treat the other sex coolly, and with an immense superiority; but it is quite another thing when it comes to their demeanor toward "motherly" people. In their relations with these the genus *girl* is deferential. So Fanchette, who laughed in Mr. Waring's face and made eyes at him, called Miss Milly "ma'am," and smiled submissively.

"I thought I would come and see if you wanted anything, my dear," said Miss Milly, cheerfully. "What a blessing you were not drowned, and are among your friends instead of at the bottom of the bay! It was dreadful — and you lost every stitch!"

With which climax Miss Milly held up her hands.

"Every stitch!" said Fanchette, laughing; "but I don't mind it, ma'am."

"Call me Miss Milly — that sounds more natural. But you must have a change of clothes. I wish you could wear mine — but they would not suit you at all."

Miss Milly laughed, and surveyed her portly person.

"You would look like a fright! They are not at all in the fashion. You might wear little Maya's."

"Little Maya's? I don't want any clothes, Miss Milly — but who is *Maya?*"

"She is a young lady who is staying with us, and she is very sweet. You will like her very much, and I am sure she will be glad to see you."

"I am sure I shall like her," exclaimed Fanchette. "I suppose she is a relation?"

"No, she is not a relation of Mr. Armyn's — she is from the East."

"From the East? How interesting, Miss Milly! I should so like to know her."

"Well, you shall — that will be very easy, my dear; I will bring her to see you. Her room is in the tower, just above her grandfather's — a very respectable person who came home with Mr. Armyn. He is a priest in his own country, and any one can see how good he is. But you never saw any one dress so strangely, my dear."

"Strangely, Miss Milly?"

"In a long yellow robe — and such a beard!"

"And — Maya? You said that was her name Does she dress strangely too?"

"No, indeed — just like other young ladies. I was thinking of that — she will lend you a dress, or anything you want."

Fanchette's curiosity was highly excited. Her imagination was vivid, and she resolved to make friends immediately with the Eastern maiden. She

therefore informed Miss Milly that she might want a dress; but the owner must first request her to accept a part of her wardrobe.

"You know she might not like it if you went to her and just asked for one of her dresses, Miss Milly. It would be a great deal better for me to become acquainted with her first. Don't you think she would come and see me? I am the last arrival! But if you choose I will go and visit her first."

"I will bring her here, my dear."

"You are so good!"

"And you are very sweet!" said Miss Milly, affectionately.

Fanchette then acted, as usual, in accordance with her first impulse. She threw herself upon Miss Milly and kissed her; at which Miss Milly laughed and looked much pleased.

"Now I'll go and bring Maya," she said.

With this she went away, leaving Fanchette much excited. This was natural under the circumstances. There was a companion of her own age and sex at Montrose, and this companion was a maiden of another part of the world! She was sure she would be interested in her, and that they would become friends immediately. It was delightful! — the granddaughter of an Oriental priest in a long robe! They would tell each other all about their own countries, and have a thousand things to say — they would chatter, chatter, for a whole night and day at the very least. It was charming!

The door opened, and the maiden whom Waring had seen leaning out of the window, glided in. Fanchette looked at her with admiration. She had never seen such beautiful black hair in her life; and disdainful as she was of her own poor straw-colored locks, she considered hair like Maya's perfection. The black eyes, too, were wonderful; and as to Maya's figure, that was far prettier than her own, since it was fuller.

Then Fanchette, with the rapid glance of her sex, summed up the whole subject of Maya's costume. It was simple but in faultless taste: a dress of cashmere pattern fitting perfectly to her figure; a light fringe of lace beneath a rosy chin; sleeves falling back and displaying the round arms; and slippers with rosettes on the smallest of feet. From head to foot — from the rosettes to the dark hair carried back from her brunette forehead — Maya was a young beauty, of a style precisely opposite, however, to Fanchette's. But this was a new attraction. Fanchette did not think herself handsome. The mild sweetness of Maya's eyes and lips was perfection in her estimation; and rising quickly, she ran forward and repeated the very same ceremony performed with Miss Milly.

Fanchette kissed Maya!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHATTER.

FEW scenes are more agreeable than the grounds of a country house about twilight. The light of evening lingers on the summits of the trees, or tints with its rose color the sky overhead; the wind whispers in the foliage; the birds chirp; the sound of voices and laughter is heard from wandering groups — the day is done with its toils or its cares, and night approaches slowly with its supreme blessing of repose.

On this evening the old house of Montrose seemed to be quietly enjoying itself. The sun was disappearing beyond the waters of the Chesapeake, and the last red beams touched the oaks and the tower, bathing them in its warm light. A rosy mist, slowly descending from the orange sky, rounded the outlines of every object, and from the little wooded cove where the yacht was moored could be heard the songs of the 'longshoremen mingling with the faint whisper of the surge.

Armyn was seated on the terrace, conversing with Papa Melville — a reserved old gentleman with a great deal of quiet dignity. On the lawn,

under the trees, Mr. Waring was strolling with Fanchette, and from the manner in which the young lady laughed, it was probable that at the moment she was teasing him. She was clad in a very handsome dress which displayed her slender figure to great advantage, and her elaborately braided hair was like a coil of gold threads in the evening light. As to the dress she wore, she had positively declined saying anything, and Mr. Waring was evidently in a state of the deepest perplexity.

"Well, I thought you had lost your traps — what you dear creatures call your paraphernalia, Fanchette," said Mr. Waring. "I never saw you look so handsome, — you are what a French friend of mine calls adorable."

"Am I?" said Fanchette timidly. "If you only knew how you make my heart beat — "

"Your bother! You demons are always laying claim to that article. Why don't you marry, Fanchette, if your feelings are so inflammable?"

"Nobody will have me," returned Fanchette, looking down sadly.

"You are much mistaken. There's Charley Herbert — if he knew you were here he would arrive by the next train."

"I hope he won't! You are very anxious to marry me off, sir — why don't you marry, yourself?"

Mr. Waring shook his head.

"You are aware of my views on that subject, Fanchette."

"I am, sir — that we chatter, and it distracts you!"

"It reduces me to a state of temporary lunacy, my dear. Come, be candid, don't you know some of your dear sex who are actually prostrating? Don't think I am alluding to *you*. You never talk too much. There is a moderation, an intelligence, an avoidance of everything resembling *chatter* in your conversation which I respect, — I do not wish you to regard my observation as personal."

Now, this was undeniable sarcasm in Mr. Waring. If there ever was a chatter-box it was Fanchette, and she was aware of the fact. She was also aware that Mr. Waring was aware of it.

"You are very satirical — I wonder how you can be so ill-natured," she said. "You are always indulging in these scoffs at our expense. I suppose you would like a dumb wife, if you married at all."

"I should, indeed, my dear Fanchette," said Mr. Waring with fervor.

"Would you really?" said Fanchette, looking up at him quickly. Mr. Waring did not observe that look, or it might have warned him. Whenever Fanchette's eyes had that expression, it meant mischief.

"Would I like a beautiful creature — she must be beautiful you know — who could not chatter? I should do more than like her — I should adore her," said Mr. Waring.

"A dumb wife? Do you think you would be willing to sit opposite a *dumb* person every day at

breakfast, dinner and supper — to spend your whole existence with a wife who never opened her lips?"

"I could support it," said Mr. Waring.

"And even on occasions like this — at the hour of twilight — when heart speaks to heart with responsive tenderness — when — well — at such a romantic moment, would you really be satisfied with nothing but the language of the eyes?"

"I should!" said Mr. Waring — "if they were as pretty as yours, Fanchette."

"That is very flattering, sir! — and I am *chattering*, I suppose?"

"You? You never chatter — your conversation is really charming."

"I am very much obliged to you! Is it really? I always told you you were a dear old fellow. You are so good to me, and then you never make love to me, which is a great favor. So I take a sisterly interest in you, and wish you to remember what I now say. Are you listening to me attentively?"

"With the deepest attention."

"Would you — in real earnest, you know — like to marry a girl who could not worry you with her tongue?"

"If I married at all I should regard her as a blessing — as heaven's last, best gift, my dear Fanchette."

"Then I will find you one."

"Find her?"

"And introduce you. I really wish you to marry. All your fine feelings are running to waste. Then think what a delight it would be to me to visit your wife! We could not talk much, but the sight of your happiness would be charming. Would you like blue eyes, or black? You must tell me. What do you think of my style? But my hair is yellow, and you prefer the ebon locks, I am afraid. That is very mortifying. I have heard you express your admiration for brunettes — but I bear no malice. Let us see, then — black eyes, black hair, and a languishing expression with a shade of mischief in it — will that do?"

How it was, Mr. Waring was unable to say; but Fanchette's description brought to his mind his maiden of the moonlight. He looked at her — what did she mean! But the girl's face wore an expression of heavenly innocence, and he could make nothing of it.

"Were I thrown with such a maiden I should succumb," he said; "but remember the main point —"

"Of course. She must be dumb. I can't tel you any more now, but — don't despair! She may appear soon. Don't ask me any questions! What a lovely evening! How *can* one help *chattering?* The house and grounds here are so sweet and homelike — I should love to stay for a whole week. I wonder if Papa Melville would stay at least two or three days? He has business at the North, but might put it off that long."

"You must ask him to do so, my dear. I want you to know Armyn. He is an excellent fellow."

"I like him very much. He is rather grave, but then I like grave people. And his smile is very kind. Do you think he would positively object to my remaining for a day or two?"

"I don't think he would — not positively, that is!"

"Don't you, really?" said Fanchette, laughing. "You might tell him that you took an interest in me, and that I am going to find you a wife."

"Find her *here?*"

"Perhaps! I said I would not answer any questions I suppose a wife who speaks only an unknown language is the same as a dumb wife. If I meet such a person — with black eyes and black hair, and a laughing expression — I shall try to tell her in some manner what a treasure you are. Will you see about my staying? — you must do your best to persuade Mr. Armyn not to object! Being with *you* is the main attraction. Papa Melville might go and come back in two or three days — I should not feel lonely. There is Miss Milly, she's such a good old creature — and dear Maya — I kissed them both. You cannot think what friends we are already — myself and Maya. I know they like me, because they told me so — that is Miss Milly did. Poor Maya! Just to think — but she smiles and looks so sweetly at me that I understand everything she means. She is lovely — lovely! I wish you knew her, you dear old fellow —"

Fanchette stopped, out of breath. Mr. Waring gasped. Then Fanchette knew the maiden of the moonlight! Her name was Maya! That face had made a much deeper impression on Mr. Waring than he knew. He had thought of it, had it before him indeed at all hours of the day. It was not a moonlight fancy, since Fanchette had *kissed* her, — and he burst forth into questions.

Fanchette did not answer them. She was looking at some persons in a family carriage which came up the hill. As the carriage reached the terrace, and Armyn came out to receive his company, Fanchette left Mr. Waring and ran quickly toward it.

Then the bystanders saw Fanchette clasped in the arms of two ladies, and heard these three "dears" uttered in rapid succession:

"Dear Fanchette!"

"Dear Mrs. Delancy!"

"Dear Louise!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RAJAH OF KABUL.

IT was some days after the events just related. Waring and Armyn were conversing on a rustic seat under a large oak; and from the drawing-room came the sound of the piano, and the voices of young ladies — the happy and laughing voices of Louise and Fanchette.

On the evening of her visit to Montrose Mrs. Delancy had informed Armyn that another telegram had summoned her instantly to Kentucky. If she wished to see her aunt it would be necessary to go at once. He had been so kind as to offer to take charge of Louise during their absence, and she had accordingly brought her at once without ceremony. Then after an early tea Colonel and Mrs. Delancy had gone straight to the train, and Louise had become an inmate of Montrose.

It was not probable that she would be lonely with Fanchette, who was her close friend. As Fanchette had told Armyn, they had long been acquainted; and the presence of Louise was one of the great inducements which determined the young actress to remain. Papa Melville was obliged to go to the

North on business connected with Fanchette's engagements, and offered no objection whatever to the prolongation of her stay at Montrose; and thus what Fanchette had suggested in jest to Waring duly occurred. Instead of going, she stayed — and Armyn made no objection whatever.

In truth, if Armyn had expressed his feelings, he would have said that he was very much pleased indeed to see the young faces. It is not pleasant to be in a large country house by one's self all the while, and even the face of a male friend is not sufficient to dispel one's *ennui*. Indeed, to lay down another maxim — houses require the faces of women and children to give them sunshine. If there are no children, then young faces on which there is yet no shadow are necessary. This sunshine had come now to Montrose in the persons of Louise, Maya and Fanchette, and the presence of the latter seemed specially welcome to Armyn. If his sentiment for Fanchette was beginning to be anything more than regard, his face did not show it. He treated her as he treated Louise, and Maya, who had made her appearance, with cordial courtesy only.

Mr. Waring had lingered too, and had not the least idea evidently of returning to the city. He had been duly presented to Maya, who made him a polite courtesy, and then blushed and looked sad at her inability to join in the animated conversation. Did Mr. Waring relish that silence as much as he declared that he would? It is doubtful; and he was probably going to be subjected again to the

fearful ordeal of Fanchette's tongue. Meanwhile, however, he kept up his good spirits, and having retired on this morning to the rustic seat with his friend, took his revenge in advance by satirical comments.

"It has come at last!" said Mr. Waring in a tragic voice. "Something told me it would; and I think I remember predicting it."

"Predicting what, my dear Waring?" said Armyn.

"That your peace would be destroyed, and Montrose, that abode of philosophic quiet, be invaded by a bevy of these diabolical beings. Just listen to them!"

"You are ungallant. Young ladies are not diabolical."

"Well, another thing is, your attempt to deceive me, Armyn. You swore there was no dream-maiden of the moonlight, and yonder I see her through the window."

"I did not deny her existence. I only laughed at you for fancying that such a thing was possible. If you had asked me the plain question, a regard for truth would have compelled me to tell you that she *was* a real maiden."

"I was sure of it in spite of your unworthy and inhospitable evasions. As a deceiver you are not a brilliant success, Armyn. You have a profound and exhaustive ignorance of human nature if you supposed I did not know that you were laughing at me."

"Well, at least there are no more secrets and *mysteries*, now — your dear mysteries. Anonda and Maya have made their appearance — you see, after all, that they are plain every-day people."

"Every-day people!"

"Anonda is simply a respectable old priest of Buddha, and Maya resembles any other young lady — does she not?"

"She does not!" exclaimed Mr. Waring; "she is a wonder! a houri. It is the correct thing, I believe, to speak of an Oriental beauty as a *houri* — therefore she is a houri."

"She certainly is handsome, and very amiable also. What a pity you cannot speak her native tongue! — you might make yourself agreeable. I would offer to act as your interpreter; but then an interpreter under such circumstances would be awkward, would it not?"

"Rather!" responded Mr. Waring, making an effort to laugh unconcernedly; "but the conversation is wandering from the main point. You have not condescended to tell me the least bit about these wonderful strangers."

"You volunteered to discover all."

"I repent: who are they?"

"There is no reason why you should not be told. Their presence here at Montrose is the simplest thing in the world. Anonda is a priest of Buddha, who came with me from India, and will go back when I go. He is a man of high character and great learning. I induced him to accompany me,

and see the Western continent, of which he had heard so much. He has visited the chief cities of the United States with me, but, finding our prosaic costume unsuited to him and uncomfortable, returned to Montrose and resumed his own. That is natural and easy to understand, is it not?"

"Well, yes. So he's a Buddhist — that respectable old boy?"

"Or a Parsee, I really don't know which. He worships fire, which is a peculiarity of believers in the Zendavista — the followers of Zoroaster."

"None of your outlandish talk, Armyn! I am happy to say that I am profoundly ignorant of everything un-American; and now about your young friend Maya?"

"She is his granddaughter. He was so much attached to her that he resolved she should accompany him."

"And remain in retirement in her tower!"

"She does not remain in retirement, as you see. It is very unreasonable in you to expect a solitary young lady to come down and receive a young gentleman visitor. You forget that the maidens of the East are carefully guarded from the approach of such monsters."

"And that explains everything — the whole mystery?"

"Certainly. As soon as Maya could do so with propriety, she made her appearance. You ought to cultivate her acquaintance now: she is very sweet."

"How can I?" said Mr. Waring, ruefully. "I

don't speak any of the Semitic dialects! What is her language?"

"The Bengâlî."

"Not acquainted with it!"

With which Mr. Waring knit his brows in such a manner as to bring a smile to the face of his friend.

"You ought to study these dialects of the East — they are striking," said Armyn.

"I will with pleasure if you will take me with you to that outlandish country. You are going back soon, I think I heard you say?"

"Yes: I've made up my mind to return in the yacht; and as Maya and Anonda will go with me, the voyage might be agreeable."

Mr. Armyn blushed slightly, and said with an easy air, —

"You go by the Suez Canal?"

"No: that is the longest route."

"The longest? — to India?"

"I am not going by way of India. I am going by way of Batoun on the Black Sea."

"Well, my dear fellow, I don't wish to meddle with what don't concern me. Still I wish you could find it convenient to tell me where you are going from Batoun."

"To Kabul, of course."

"Kabul?"

"I live there, since I am the rajah."

"What! — you are the *rajah of Kabul?*"

"Certainly. Is it possible that I have failed to mention the fact before?"

Mr. Waring extended his lower limbs straight in front of him, dropping his hands at his side. It was his grand exhibition of astonishment.

"And all this time I have been hobnobbing with a real rajah! — a prince, a viceroy, a lord of the bowstring!"

"Compose yourself," said Armyn: "I am not going to order a slave to strangle you!"

"I have treated with familiarity a prince, a grand official, when all the time I thought you were only a plain American citizen!"

"I am an American citizen still. I have not changed my nationality."

"Good heavens! what took you to that barbarous country? I strive to wrestle with the mystery, Armyn. The spirit is willing, but the understanding weak."

"Well, my dear friend," Armyn said, "I see that your mind is falling into a condition of general paralysis, to use one of your phrases. I would have told you all this before but for your boast that I could conceal nothing from you, and the further reason that I thought it better not to discuss certain affairs which brought me to this country, until now. There really is no necessity, however, to make a further mystery of a very simple matter. If you will listen, I will explain everything in a very few words."

Waring did not say that he would listen, but his expression made that unnecessary.

"I visited Kabul with no express object," said

Armyn. "It was just after the war. I had nothing further to do in this country at that time, and you know, from what I told you the other day, that I was very melancholy. I felt that travel and action were necessary to prevent me from brooding, and without knowing exactly how, I found myself in Egypt. There I met with a number of old comrades who had offered their services to the Khedive; but I was not very much pleased with what I saw of him, nor any better with the Shah, with whom I afterwards became acquainted. I went on to India at last — still without any fixed object; and having some curiosity to see Afghanistan, travelled north through the Punjaub to Kabul. It seems that the title of an American soldier is highly respected in the East. I was a soldier, you know, and came from America, and the Emir gave me a flattering reception. The rest followed. The Emir's army was brave but undisciplined — both Russia and England were threatening him with invasion. What he found in me was a soldier trained in the great American civil war, and he offered me a rajahship. This gave me immediate command of the troops in Kabul; and as this was the vital point in case hostilities began, other forces of the Emir at Candahar were concentrated there. I am in command of them."

"And you came to this country — "

"To procure arms, as the journals have discovered. War with England will begin soon, and it will be a hard struggle. I have no sentiment of

hostility towards England. She is fighting to protect her Indian frontier from Russia; but the Emir is fighting for an object I respect even more — to preserve the national independence and the integrity of his kingdom."

"He is right."

"Certainly; and my sympathy with his policy induced me to accept the rajahship. It is a fight for national independence that the Emir is making. They are a barbarous race, but after all their cause is just. The struggle will be bitter, and it is more than probable that England will have the best of it; but I'll tell you what I mean to do, Waring: I mean to fight to the last."

"You are going soon?"

"Yes. The arms are gone by way of Batoun. If they are not stopped by the Russian commander at Tiflis, they will arrive. I am anxious to get back, and for a reason which I have not yet stated."

"What is that?"

"To restrain the excesses of the troops when hostilities begin. You may not understand that. These Eastern races are wild beasts. If left to themselves the troops of the Emir will assassinate the British residents without regard to age or sex. My presence will prevent that. I have sworn that such outrages shall cease, and I will keep my oath. If they are repeated I will turn my cannon on those who disobey my orders."

Armyn rose, and his face, which had grown animated, gradually resumed its composure.

"That is my whole story, dear Waring," he said; "I am sorry to have to dispel all the mystery which you have thrown around me. There really is not the least bit of a mystery, you see. A poor soldier, with nothing to do, and a heavy heart, goes to a new country: his familiarity with arms is of use to the authorities; they find that he can be trusted, and place him in command. That happens every day, and has happened, you see, in my case."

They went back to the house, as Armyn said that he had some letters to write, and Waring, still reflecting with deep interest on his friend's story, went into the drawing-room, where the "three graces or demons," as he called them, were assembled.

CHAPTER XXX.

ARMYN LEAVES WARING IN COMMAND.

THE graces or demons were amusing themselves in a very simple and unobjectionable manner. There certainly was nothing demoniac in their proceedings. Maya, in a pretty morning dress, with her black hair arranged in a shining mass on the summit of her head, and her languishing black eyes, which had a smile in them, fixed upon Fanchette, was playing one of her Eastern airs on the piano; and Fanchette, standing beside her, was humming a vocal accompaniment. As to Louise, she was seated in a corner with a writing-desk upon her knees, and it was probable, from the expression of her face, that she was writing to Tom Winter. Colonel Delancy had quietly ignored the fact that they corresponded. Their engagement was tacitly recognized as something that *might* result in marriage, if nothing prevented, in the remote future; and meanwhile these young people, as young people will, enjoyed the sunshine.

Mr. Waring's entrance made no impression on the group. He was accustomed to go and come in an unceremonious manner. He went to the piano,

and Maya turned her head and smiled. It was a very sweet smile, and her face was charming. Her complexion was brunette, her lips red, her great black eyes full of languishing sweetness — it was Mr. Waring's phrase; he had employed it in strict confidence when talking about Maya with Fanchette. That young lady now greeted him with a wicked smile, and said, —

"Come and sing for Maya, Mr. Waring. She is devoted to music, especially vocal music, and I have managed to make her understand that you have a fine tenor voice. Won't you sing for us?"

Mr. Waring exhibited slight embarrassment, and hesitated. He was not looking at Fanchette, or he might have seen that she was enjoying immensely the state of affairs between the journalist and the houri. She continued to urge him, and then placing a sheet of music before Maya, made signs to her to play the air. It was the little ballad "Bonny Jean," and Maya proceeded to play the accompaniment.

"Now do, Mr. Waring — we shall enjoy it so much!" said Fanchette, innocently; and as Maya at that moment looked with a smile at Waring, and seemed to second the request, that gentleman began to sing.

He had a very fine tenor, as Fanchette had said, and it filled the whole room. There was touching pathos in the voice and expression of Mr. Waring as he looked at Maya, and seemed to inform her that *she* was his "heart's true queen;" and Fan-

chette, who had retired to one corner with a book in her hand, looked over the top of it, shook slightly, and then hastily left the room, apparently overcome by the pathos of the ballad.

The music continued, the air was full of it: no other sound was heard — not even the light wheels of a vehicle driving up to the terrace. Fanchette, who had returned, and stood with a composed face by the piano, heard steps in the hall, and then the door opened. Mr. Winter came in with another young gentleman, whom he presented as his friend Mr. Charles Herbert.

Mr. Herbert was a young gentleman of about twenty-three, very handsome, with a slight brown mustache, an air of gayety, and clad in the height of the fashion. He was the son of a gentleman of wealth, living on the upper shore of the bay; spent a considerable part of his time in the capital enjoying himself; and his presence at Montrose now arose from a very simple circumstance. He had made the acquaintance of Fanchette about a year before this time, and announced to his friends that he was "smitten" with her. Waring had written to Tom Winter that Fanchette was at Montrose, and as Mr. Winter mentioned the fact to his friend Mr. Herbert, that gentleman had at once proposed that they should "run down to the neighborhood." He lived only about fifteen miles off on the railway, and they could drive over. He had a fine pair of horses, and Montrose was *not far from Colonel Delancy's*. In a word, Mr. Her-

bert induced his friend Winter to accompany him; and turning over the special letter to another friend of Waring's, Tom Winter had done so.

Fanchette met Mr. Charles Herbert — called Charley by his friends — with great cordiality. She really liked him, for he was a very good fellow — rather foppish, but then he was young and gay, which made a difference. She had amused herself occasionally at his expense on former occasions; but now, in the country, it was possible that Mr. Herbert might amuse *her*. She therefore held out her hand, smiled sweetly, and they entered into conversation. Then Armyn came in, bowed cordially to his guests, and made himself agreeable; after which he rose quietly and returned to the library.

His mail had just arrived; and among the pile of letters was one which seemed to give him some annoyance. It bore a New England postmark, and he read it twice, knitting his brows and reflecting. He was thus engaged when Waring came in.

"Don't let me disturb you — I came here for refuge," said Mr. Waring. "I observed that you retired just now with a patriarchal air, and you see I have imitated your example."

Armyn smiled. It was always a great enjoyment to him to talk with Waring.

"You are not a very venerable patriarch," he said; "I thought you would be able to amuse yourself with little Maya."

Mr. Waring shook his head sadly, and sat down.

"There is a slight obstacle to amusing one's self with a young lady who doesn't talk," he said.

"Is that so great an objection? I thought you had a dread of *chatter*."

"I have, my friend — a dread amounting to horror. But then there is something worse — never to hear the dear creatures utter a word: it is unnatural!"

"Well, I sympathize with you. There is Miss Fanchette — she is not dumb."

"Dumb? I believe you! She is a chatter-box — the curious thing is, she never bores me. She is the only woman whose chatter I really like. Her fun is inspiring. At present she and her young friend Charley Herbert are crossing rapiers, and I rather think Fanchette has the best of it."

"Are they friends?"

"Yes, very good friends. Charley Herbert is not a bad fellow. The chief objection to him is that he is young. He is also something of an exquisite, — but then I like exquisites. They are a good-natured species of the genus *homo*, and I think Charley is in love with Fanchette."

"Very well," said Armyn quietly; "can't you induce him and your friend Mr. Winter to remain here?"

"To remain?"

"I am going away. I have business at the North. I have just received a letter informing me that there has been a difficulty in obtaining a clearance for one of the vessels I mentioned — containing

arms. I shall have to go and see about it in person, my dear Waring, and count upon you to play host here during my absence."

"Play host?"

"It is impossible to leave these young ladies by themselves in this big house, with no gentleman. I appeal to your gallantry and friendship both. Take command, my dear friend, as we used to say in the army; and as you might find the responsibility more serious than you like to face, why, persuade Mr. Winter and Mr. Herbert to remain and assist you."

Waring burst into a sudden laugh.

"There's your situation!" he exclaimed. "What a comedy! There's material for a three-act drama, at the very least! If I only had the genius to rise to the height of the occasion, I should write the great American comedy."

"Explain yourself."

"Is it necessary? To propose such a thing to a bachelor! — what a monstrosity!"

"I don't see that there is anything at all monstrous in so simple a suggestion."

"Simple? Reflect, my friend. You can't be in earnest. You don't mean to leave an inoffensive bachelor in command of — responsible for — these three demons? Good heavens! the idea is enough to make every separate hair on my head stand erect. I shall go raving mad! My reason will never survive it. Tell me — tell me, I beseech you, that you are jesting!"

"How can I, since I am in earnest? Well, I see you are going to consent."

"Consent? It is impossible!"

"Why is it impossible?"

"Good heavens! They won't mind me in the least — especially Fanchette. She'll flirt all day with Charley Herbert, and laugh in my face. Three demons of girls — two of them with lovers! and your friend is to manage such a crew!"

"Don't try to manage them. Leave them to their devices, and endeavor to cheer the *ennui* of poor Maya!"

This home-thrust evidently had its effect upon Mr. Waring. He colored and subsided.

"Are you really obliged to go?"

"I am compelled to do so, and count on you to represent me in my absence if you can possibly stay."

"I can stay, as Tom Winter has turned the special over to Jack Norris; but —".

"Then there will be no trouble, and I shall feel quite at rest, Waring. Ask your friends to stay too. You might succeed by a little persuasion."

"It won't take much. Charley Herbert has nothing to do, and is awfully sweet on Fanchette; as to poor Tom Winter, he's spoony beyond words. It will only take one minute to overcome their reluctance."

"Well, that's all arranged, then. You will stay, and be commander-in-chief."

"I consent to do so. But once more, how am I

ever to control these diabolical creatures? Do you suppose they will respect my authority, or pay the least attention to my fatherly admonitions? Will Fanchette, for instance, mind me if I order her in from the terrace, for fear of the dew, when she is flirting with Charley Herbert?"

"You might try."

"Or the young Louise when she is talking romance with Tom Winter on the rustic seat under the oak?"

"Do your duty at least, and enjoy the luxury of a good conscience. You will find an active coadjutor in Miss Milly. She is an excellent person, and I should never have made my proposition if she had not been here to matronize you young people and keep you straight. The affair is settled, then. I shall go to-morrow in the train which passes about eleven o'clock in the day. You must amuse the young ladies to the best of your ability, Waring. If Papa Melville comes back, beg him not to take Fanchette away until after my return, which will be in a few days."

"I will."

"This journey changes my plans, or rather delays my sailing," said Armyn; "but that will make no difference. I shall arrive in time. There is always time to arrive when one is probably going to be killed."

"Why do you think you will be killed? It is a mere fancy," said Waring.

"Yes, but then you must remember that sailors

— and I am half sailor — are superstitious. I don't know why, but I am sure I am going to meet a bullet out yonder. What matter? There is an Eastern phrase which has a great deal of philosophy in it."

"What is that?"

"The phrase, 'It is written.' After all, that sums up the whole philosophy of human life. I am not a fatalist in the Eastern sense — very far from it. But one thing is certain — that what will be, will be. The great thing is for a man to do his duty, and leave the rest to Providence — is it not?"

"Yes!"

"I am trying to do what seems to be mine, my dear friend. In fact, there is no temptation in my case to live for any other object. I am not at all ambitious. I look with absolute wonder on the hurrying crowd who jostle and scramble for what they call the prizes of life — rank, or money, or a name. I don't want rank or money, and really don't see what good a famous name does anybody. A sensualist has a certain sort of enjoyment, but I am not a sensualist. One's intellect is a great resource — nearly the only one — for amusement; and real happiness, of course, is only found in the affections. As this, however, is denied me, I can look for happiness elsewhere — in performing what I think is my duty, you understand. Remember the great line of the French poet I quoted to you: 'Not for ourselves, but all men, we are born.'"

"I remember it," said Waring, in a voice very different from his habitual tone of gayety.

"The enterprise I am going to embark in is a worthy one," said Armyn. "I do what I can to help a free people to repel foreign invasion. Kabul is caught in a vise. Russia presses on one side and England on the other. The highway to India is under the walls of the Bala-Hissar, and there is going to be war — and I shall have my part in it. Why not? I can espouse the side of the Emir with a perfectly serene conscience, I say. A much greater man than myself, Lafayette, espoused the cause of the American Colonies against England."

"And you think you will be killed?"

"I think it is probable. But then, I shall fall doing my duty, — which is something, — and shall have the consciousness that I have done even more than assist a free people to repel invasion."

"What is that?"

"Something, however feeble, to establish Christianity in the East. You have no conception of the effect of Buddhism on the human mind. It is true paralysis — living death — and poisons the whole fabric of Eastern society. I speak of it in the light of a political institution: as long as it exists, there is no freedom or progress in the East. I do not discuss the greater question, though I am a profound believer in Christianity. It is enough to say that Buddhism is a destroying poison. The only hope for the Oriental races is to undermine it and substi-

tute the true faith. With this end in view I brought Anonda with me to this country. If he once became a proselyte I was sure from my knowledge of him that he would inaugurate a Christian propaganda in the East. He is a man of supreme intelligence and fearless character. What he believes, he will preach. As to his views at this moment I am unable to speak with any certainty; but I am tolerably sure that he is no longer a Buddhist. So you see, my dear Waring, that if I succeed in this only, I shall accomplish what ought to make my death a tranquil one."

Waring did not reply. These words of Armyn, uttered with his usual simplicity, evidently made a profound impression upon him. Did he compare his own careless life from day to day, without object, or any aim but amusement, with that of Armyn? His brows contracted.

"You are right," he said earnestly; "I never knew you, Armyn. You make me ashamed. I am one of the frivolous crowd yonder, lost in the dust and the whirl. To think of that tempest in a teapot! — of the wriggling and scheming, the dinners, and dresses, the tinsel and glitter, the petty ambitions, and the whole farce of it! It is horrible and ludicrous, if a man only stops to think of it — of these worms wriggling painfully over their little foot of earth toward their graves! I am not a censor, and no better than the rest; but I can see that there is something better in life than all that. You are right: there is something more to live for

than these baubles — a seat in Congress, or the Cabinet, or to be a Senator or President. You say what it is — to live for other people, not for yourself: to do a man's duty, and die, if you die, with a good conscience!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ROSES OF MONTROSE.

ARMYN went away on the train which passed the station at noon; and seeing the carriage return empty, Waring realized for the first time the heavy responsibility which rested upon him.

"What on earth am I to do with them?" he muttered as he stood on the terrace smoking his cigar. "They are certain to get me into trouble — these diabolical creatures. I suppose it would be more gallant to view them in the light of angels — to write verses in their albums 'To the Roses of Montrose.' But the less I have to do with them, the better; I'll never be able to manage them. One man, all alone, attempt to manage three girls forming a diabolical confederacy! It is a wild idea!"

"What is a wild idea, sir!" said a voice. It was Fanchette, who had stolen behind him and overheard his soliloquy.

Mr. Waring affected to start dramatically.

"One really has no privacy in this establishment!" he groaned.

"Poor fellow!" Fanchette retorted with a pitying smile. "What a fate yours is! You are not

even allowed to smoke here, much less to occupy the drawing-room — Maya's there!"

"Is she?" said Mr. Waring, with a slight color, which delighted Fanchette.

"You are blushing!" she cried; "you actually are blushing like a girl! What in the world is the matter?"

Mr. Waring assumed an easy air, and said, —

"Nothing at all, my dear."

"Don't attempt to deceive me, sir! You may need my assistance."

"Your assistance?"

"I am your friend, and you had better confide in me; but it makes no difference. There is nothing to tell — do you suppose I have no eyes? Poor fellow! To think that such a woman-hater should fall a victim! That first evening in the moonlight — but I won't tease you, poor dear fellow!"

Mr. Waring blushed — unmistakably this time, and Fanchette added in a low voice, —

"I knew it would come at last — pride goes before a fall! It is a judgment on you for laughing at us; but tell me all about it! It is charming — you can confide in me. Goodness! are you really in love? Has Maya thawed the ice? She is fascinating — it is not at all strange! I am not mortified. I have been struggling for years to make an impression, but bear no malice. Do tell me all about it!"

Mr. Waring hesitated, and looked bewildered. He avoided Fanchette's eyes, and seemed desirous

of taking refuge somewhere. Finally he threw away his cigar, offered his arm, and they went out to the seat under the oak.

After this interview any one could see that there was an understanding between Mr. Waring and Fanchette. They had numerous additional interviews, and Tom Winter indulged in covert allusions to the fact that his friend was becoming interested in Miss Fanchette. But Waring only smiled and smoked his cigar — after which he generally went into the drawing-room, where Fanchette and Maya were at the piano.

Maya played exquisitely, which was the result, Armyn had one day informed him, of her education in a school for young ladies at Bombay. She was quite familiar with French and Italian opera, and played the gayest airs with a spirit and abandon scarcely to be expected in a mild-eyed daughter of the East. Maya was, however, very unlike the conventional idea of an Oriental maiden, passing her hours in seclusion, and feeding on her own thoughts. Mr. Waring's fancy that his fairy of the moonlight was such a person, had very soon been dissipated by association with the real maiden. Her unfortunate infirmity prevented her from taking part in the chatter; but then the face has its language, which is often as eloquent as spoken words; and Maya's lovely brunette cheeks were nearly always dimpled by smiles. Her laughing eyes had a peculiar witchery also, and fascinated Waring. He

said to himself that she really did not require words to express what she thought and felt; and then there was her performance on the grand piano. It was superb. And if she could not speak, she could bend her head over her shoulder, and look at him with her deep eyes, in which he read — was it a secret tenderness?

That might be; for if Mr. Waring had seen Maya on that moonlight night, she had also seen him. Thence romantic reveries, perhaps, on the one side as on the other. As Maya was only about eighteen, this might be her first romance; and, coming from the seclusion of her life in the East, it was very possible that she had lost her heart to the handsome journalist, whose face was enough to attract any maiden.

The immense difficulty, no doubt, was for these romantic young people to exchange ideas. Waring came to that point, with a deep sigh, in one of his interviews with Fanchette. There was no longer any reserve between them on the momentous condition of affairs.

"You see there never was a poor fellow in such a fix, Fanchette," said Waring, "to be — well, interested in — a young person and not to be able to communicate with her!"

"It is very unfortunate," said Fanchette, with a sigh of celestial sympathy.

"I suppose there never was a fellow so unlucky before," groaned Mr. Waring.

"Don't take it too much to heart," Fanchette re-

monstrated; "remember, a great deal is to be said with the eyes. And then, only think of the tones of the voice! I should not despair if I were a young man, which I am truly glad I am not."

Waring shook his head.

"Girls are much more intelligent," Fanchette added, "than you suppose. I will not upbraid you, poor fellow, with your former low opinion of us. You see I am heaping coals of fire upon your head by being good to you. You must not give way to despair. I am certain that if you and Maya had a good long talk, — or at least a good long interview, — you could very soon tell her, by the tones of your voice alone, how much attached you are to her."

"Do you think so?"

"I am quite certain that she would understand you. The obstacle would be to secure such an interview in the midst of so much company."

"It would be impossible; there is always somebody."

"Shall I set my wits to work?"

"Your wits? You have any quantity, Fanchette, but how will they serve you on the present occasion?"

"They will serve me very well. I know you would like to have *somebody* all to yourself for an hour on the terrace. As the moon is nearly full, it might remind you of another occasion."

"Fanchette! Have I misunderstood you up to the present time, and are you an angel?"

"That is very complimentary. If I am to be treated in that manner I will cease my disinterested exertions, sir."

"No, don't, Fanchette! You see I was only joking; I have always looked upon you as an angel, not as one of the weaker vessels!"

Fanchette's lips contracted.

"There is some one coming. Shall I?" she said.

"Yes, yes! — when shall it be?"

"This evening, if you wish."

"This evening?"

"After the yacht excursion. I will come out with Maya on the terrace, and then leave her on some pretext. When I come back into the drawing room you might go out to the terrace, and I would entertain the company. I am sure that is friendly, you ungrateful creature!"

"Friendly?" exclaimed Mr. Waring. "It is heavenly — which is natural, for you are an angel, Fanchette!"

"Poor fellow! How much in love you are! I never knew anything so charming! It really is mortifying to think that in all these years *I* could make no impression; and now, in a day, in an hour, your poor heart is irredeemably lost!"

The celestial sympathy, in Fanchette's eyes now, was mingled with smiles.

"I can only think of one thing that explains your indifference to me," she said. "I talk so much — *chatter*, as you say only too justly. I wish I did

not, but I fear the habit is fixed. You never could bear a woman who chattered, and yet you like me — you know you do."

"I love you with all my heart, Fanchette!"

"And somebody else with all the rest! No, it is not at all necessary to make polite speeches, sir! You don't *love* me at all — you keep all that for somebody who can't chatter — your model angel! I feel very much outraged and very sad; but we are told to forgive our enemies. Then you really are so much in love, you dear old fellow! — How do you do, Mr. Herbert? You must certainly go with us on the yacht excursion this evening, — won't you?"

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON THE TERRACE BY MOONLIGHT.

THE yachting party returned to Montrose about sunset, and after tea, at which Miss Milly presided, as usual, the drawing-room buzzed with voices and echoed with laughter.

Age satirizes youth sometimes, but youth is a very good thing to possess. The flavor of life is in the palate, rather than the food, and the brightness of the sunshine in the eyes which look at it. The yacht excursion, under that able seaman, Mr. Waring, had been a gay affair. Given a yacht, young company, and a cloudless sky, life is always gay. It is only when the sun goes down, and the gray-beard at the helm hears the moan of the sea, that he thinks of the unknown port to which he is steering.

Coming back at sunset, these fine revellers, or Arcadians as Mr. Waring styled them, were bent on prolonging the festivities into the night. Mr. Waring was the only one of the company who seemed restless. It is mortifying to the historian of this serene man of the world and of the press, to be compelled to state plainly that he had fallen

hopelessly in love. He was apparently unaware of the existence of any one but a maiden with black hair, in a pink dress, who was playing the piano. When they interchanged glances a slight color betrayed him; and Fanchette, who was looking at them as she talked in a corner with Mr. Charles Herbert, saluted the observations of that gentleman with sudden and wholly irrational laughter.

After a while Fanchette rose and went to the piano, near which Mr. Waring was standing. As the music filled the apartment, she could speak to him with perfect safety, almost without lowering her voice. Looking at him out of her wicked eyes, she said, —

"Shall I now?"

"Yes!"

"Poor, poor fellow! I did not know it was so serious. You really need a friend, — and I have something to tell you."

She came up close to him.

"I have made Maya understand! At first she refused — but you are aware what a woman's *no* means. It invariably means *yes*, you know! You ought to be congratulated. Summon your courage, my lord: the moment approaches!"

"Fanchette, you are laughing at your old and attached friend!"

"How could I be so heartless? Is not your happiness the dearest wish of my heart!"

"Angel!"

"I will saunter out of the drawing-room with *somebody*, and go up-stairs. Then *somebody* will come down and stroll out to the terrace to look at the moonlight. I will then re-appear in the drawing room, and tell a fib to explain her absence — during which improper proceeding a romantic interview might take place under the moon!"

Mr. Waring was so much overcome that he seized Fanchette's hand with a rapturous expression; but she drew it away, smiling in a confidential manner, and went to the side of Maya just as she rose from the piano. As she did so, Fanchette twined her arm in that of her friend. They strolled to and fro, after an idle fashion, and then in the most natural manner went out of the room, Fanchette closing the door behind them.

As the temporary disappearance of young ladies from a drawing-room is a natural circumstance, the little incident did not attract the least attention. The group of young people continued to laugh and talk, and Mr. Waring, with masterly ingenuity, edged toward the door. A cabinet portrait on the wall had evidently attracted his attention, and as the execution was very delicate, he went close to it in order to examine it. In this position his ear was close to the door; and any one who had been in his secret might have seen that he was listening.

The rustle of a dress in the hall without, suddenly caught his ear. Some one was passing; and the sound died away in the direction of the terrace.

Mr. Waring's heart throbbed, and his smooth

white-brunette complexion reddened. It really was astonishing, but this sardonic newspaper man and critic of society and life was blushing as absurdly as a school-boy.

The sound had died away, and Mr. Waring was almost afraid that the beating of his heart would be heard in the silence. This apprehension was an evidence of his unfortunate condition, since every tongue was rattling. He opened the door with a cowardly hand, and closing it behind him, went out to the terrace.

A glance told him that his dear Fanchette had not deceived him. He was almost tempted to doubt his good fortune. There on the seat extending along the wall sat his beloved. She was half in moonlight, half in shadow, with a shawl thrown around her to ward off the dew. From the skirt of her pink dress extended a little Eastern slipper with a rosette on the instep. With one white hand she put back her hair beneath the cashmere shawl, which nearly enveloped her in its graceful folds; — the beautiful figure shrank back into the shadow as if alarmed.

Mr. Waring went to her side and sat down, but she half retreated from him. She was evidently overcome at her bold act, and turned away her face. If his heart had throbbed at the rustle of her dress when he heard it in the hall, it began to beat a tattoo now when he was seated beside her. What Mr. Waring said — even with the certainty that he would not be understood — it would not be well

bred in his historian to report. Such interviews naturally concern only those who are engaged in them; and if all that the great and wise uttered in their wooing were reported, how few great and wise people there would be!

Mr. Waring, having uttered an eloquent speech, possessed himself of a small hand. It was hanging down conveniently, and the proceeding was natural. He then strove to induce his companion to turn her face toward him, and divest her beautiful head of the odious shawl which enveloped it.

The hand did not repulse him, or attempt to escape from his own. The maiden uttered a sigh. Mr. Waring drew away the shawl, and a glory of straw-colored hair dazzled him. The sudden laughter of red lips startled the moonlit terrace. It was Fanchette!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FANCHETTE'S IDEA.

FOR some days after the scene on the terrace, a perceptible gloom fell upon the "roses of Montrose." Mr. Waring sulked, and the sulks are contagious. His dignity and authority as man of the world and superior being had been outraged. He had been victimized. That wicked Fanchette, whom he regarded as a child, had turned him into ridicule, and he revolved the means of revenge. The occasion might come, and he promised himself that he would embrace it. Meanwhile he would indicate by a bearing full of silent dignity his deep displeasure.

It was a proof of Fanchette's powers of coaxing that all these stern resolutions came to nothing. She refused to see her enemy's cold glances; declined being repulsed by the silent dignity, and, demeaning herself generally in the fashion of a humming-bird, hovered around him, teased him, and succeeded in overcoming his fit of the sulks. Seeing at last that her triumph was complete, Fanchette took his arm one morning and proposed a stroll. They walked out, and the young lady sighed deeply, the victim of penitence.

"It was very wrong in me," she said; "I wonder how I could have been guilty of such conduct! But, then, you dear old fellow, it was irresistible. I am half tempted to console you by telling you something — but I have promised that I would not."

The last remnants of Mr. Waring's reserve and sulks disappeared before these words. What did Fanchette mean; to tell him something? Something? But Fanchette declined to enlighten him, and directed the conversation to the subject of Mr. Winter and Louise.

"I was thinking this morning that it is a shame they do not get married," she said; "why should they not?"

"Well," said Waring, dismissing the subject of his own affairs with a sigh of resignation, "there are several reasons, though none of them are good; still, other people think so. There is Mrs. Ordmore — she is bent upon marrying your friend to that fellow, Seminoff, and mothers always consider that they have the right to be consulted. Then there is Colonel Delancy — he likes Tom, but the very idea of giving up Louise puts him in low spirits."

"That is natural," Fanchette said; "but then Colonel Delancy loves her so much that he would not make her unhappy."

"He wishes them to wait."

"And it will end in Louise's marrying Prince Seminoff: why don't they prevent that?"

"Prevent it?"

"It would be very easy to do so."

"Explain yourself, my dear. I always listen to the views of your sex with respect."

"You do nothing of the sort!"

"You are much mistaken. What is your plan?"

"The danger which threatens Louise is the marriage with Prince Seminoff, isn't it?"

"Certainly."

"And Mrs. Ordmore will make Louise marry him by using her authority?"

"It really seems from what I hear that she intends to, sooner or later. She will probably get possession of the young lady by legal proceedings. You know a mother has the right to claim her daughter."

"Yes; but suppose another person had a stronger claim still on Louise. I believe *the husband* is to be obeyed first — is he not?"

"Fanchette!"

"You are one of the superior sex, — though you're not anybody's husband, — and can tell me, I suppose."

"Fanchette," said Mr. Waring, with deep admiration, "if the remark is ever again made in my presence that women are deficient in intellect, I will repel the calumny with indignation! My dear Fanchette! you tower above all of us; you have discovered the *mot* of the enigma, the thread out of the labyrinth! Why has nobody thought of that? Certainly the husband is a superior being, and his authority is paramount. Tom Winter has only to

sustain that interesting relation toward our young friend, to defy all the Mrs. Ordmores and Prince Seminoffs in the world."

"Then as soon as Colonel Delancy comes back you must go and see him, and tell him how dangerous it will be to wait," said Fanchette.

"I will do so, my dear. I take the deepest interest in these young people, and have an elderly affection for them. They are evidently in the last stage. They do nothing but look at each other. It is really astonishing to see a man so overcome as our young friend Tom Winter. I never saw a case so deplorable —"

"Except your own. You are a great deal worse," said Fanchette with candor. "I wonder what will be the end of it. I did not know it was so serious. How in the world did you ever fall in love to such an extent? Poor fellow! I sympathize with you deeply. It was very wicked in me to treat you so — on the terrace, you know! I am very sorry. I only meant, as you were always laughing at *me*, to have a little laugh at *your* expense. You have forgiven me — have you not? You see I am penitent. Come, kiss and be friends."

"With pleasure," said Mr. Waring, bending his head toward her.

"Oh, figuratively!" said Fanchette, retreating. "That will answer every purpose, sir. And now listen to me. You shall marry — somebody! Does that please you? You are blushing! — it is really

delightful! You are as much *in the last stage* as your friend Mr. Winter."

"I think not," said Mr. Waring with some confusion.

"You certainly are, poor fellow! Think what it must be to me to be in the house with you four people!"

"There's Charley Herbert — why not make it six? Then the company of Arcadians would be complete."

By way of emphasizing his remark, Mr. Waring pointed to the window of the drawing-room, where Mr. Herbert, who had willingly consented to remain at Montrose with Tom Winter, was seated, pretending to look over a photographic album, but really following Fanchette's movements on the lawn. Whether Mr. Herbert was or was not enamoured of Fanchette no one knew. Perhaps he did not know himself; he was not introspective. He certainly paid her devoted attention, and Fanchette certainly received these attentions with her brightest smiles.

"Are you going to marry Charley Herbert?" said Mr. Waring.

"What a question! How could I marry a gentleman who never asked me?"

"The response is diplomatic," said Mr. Waring, "and I think I have heard it before — you dear creatures are all alike and have the same set of phrases. Hasn't he asked you?"

"Never!"

"Isn't he going to?"

"How can I tell?" said Fanchette, innocently, and with an air of modest confusion.

Mr. Waring looked at her attentively. He was probably making a study with a view to his great romance. He had nourished the illusion that the great masculine delineator of feminine character had appeared in his person, but, pursuing his studies of that interesting subject, had begun to doubt it.

"Well," he said, "I rather think it's coming. I have observed a certain feebleness of the knees in my young friend which is suggestive. Let him down easy when the moment arrives. Cruelty is always unnecessary on such occasions. Tell him that you are wrapped up in him, but not sufficiently wrapped up under all the circumstances to justify you in becoming Mrs. Herbert. That's the correct thing. But the pupil is instructing the sage. There, he's coming out — his feelings at seeing you *tête à tête* with me have overcome him!"

And as Mr. Herbert approached, Mr. Waring was heard observing that he had a letter to write to Armyn — after which announcement he politely retired, shooting a smile at Fanchette.

She and Mr. Herbert remained out on the lawn until twilight. They then came back to the house. Had their interview been of the interesting character referred to by Mr. Waring? It was difficult to say. Mr. Herbert was blushing slightly, and had

lost much of his exquisite serenity and good-humor — in fact, he was sighing. But then Fanchette's face was full of smiles, and her expression rather wicked; and Mr. Waring, attentively observing the two countenances, fell into utter bewilderment.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

EDGED TOOLS.

FANCHETTE had one habit which is not a common weakness with persons of her age and sex — to rise early and go out to enjoy the fresh air. She had always been in the habit of doing so in cities in spite of the late hour when her performances ended; and strolling through the public squares or visiting the early markets, had pleased herself with the sights and sounds of a side of life unknown to late sleepers. At Montrose the temptation to continue the same routine was much stronger. The fresh air and the odor of the leaves were delightful to her, and scarcely a morning passed which did not find her out of doors at sunrise.

On the morning after her private interview with Mr. Herbert she was out on the lawn, rambling about before that gentleman had opened his eyes. Her face glowed with health and happiness, and she enjoyed every object around her. The whole Montrose domain had about it an air of delicious freshness. The dew sparkled on the grass, the orioles were singing in the oaks, and the long wash

of the surge came up from the bay like a lullaby. Fanchette enjoyed all this with the zest of a person whose life has been passed in the midst of crowds. She had quite forgotten the dust, the thunder of wheels, and the glare of the footlights. There were a great many wild violets growing here and there, and she rambled about, gathering them with the pleasure of a child.

As she had collected a considerable number at last, she went to the seat under the oak to arrange them into a *bouquet du corsage*, and laying them down at her side was soon absorbed in that work. A love of flowers is natural to girls of her age. They take the place which horses and games hold in the estimation of growing youths. Fanchette had a sincere passion for them, and seemed to caress them with her eyes. If a poetical observer had been present, he might have compared her to a flower of the spring herself. Her hair, which was neatly braided under her chip hat and tied with a blue ribband, was the color of marigolds; her lips were like rosebuds; her white complexion suggested lilies. If those heartless critics who laugh at everything had seen Fanchette at this moment, they would have felt that the most volatile young persons of her sex have a vein of poetry in them, and love what is fresh and beautiful, as well as finery and admiration. Fanchette certainly was volatile, but then she was an excellent girl. There never was any one more mischievous, or with a greater appreciation of the ludicrous; but the least thing touched her and

brought tears to her eyes. This might have been the result of her excitable profession; but at least it was not affected. No person was less given to affectation of any description. She was called coquettish sometimes, and yet she was not really so. It was natural to her to raise her black eyes and then lower the long lashes; to laugh and sigh in one breath. If the month of one's nativity exercises an influence over the character, Fanchette must have been born in April. Mr. Waring, that profound student of feminine human nature, often said that she was "a type," — whatever that might mean, — and that he would one day rise to the height of the subject and draw her portrait. Vain boast! The running foam and the tossing spray were not more difficult to grasp — their outlines more shifting and evanescent.

Having arranged her violets to her satisfaction, Fanchette held them up, inclined her head to one side and admired them, as the early sunshine fell upon them. She then pinned them at her collar with the coral breastpin which she wore; and as the act of raising her arm for that purpose had caused a bracelet on her wrist to slip back, she pushed it down again. In doing so her finger pressed the spring of a medallion on the bracelet, and it flew open. There was the picture.

Fanchette looked at it thoughtfully. She had often been struck with the resemblance to Arymn since she had made his acquaintance. She attributed this resemblance to accident, but it had a

certain effect upon her. Trifles often lead strangers to become friends very soon, and in her interviews with Armyn since her arrival at Montrose, Fanchette had found herself rapidly losing any feeling of constraint in his society. In spite of her profession she was a person of great reserve with strangers; but from the first she had not felt that Armyn was a stranger. Something seemed to bring them in rapport with each other. Was it the incident on the bay in which he had saved her life, or what Mr. Waring had told her of his kindness and sincerity? She did not know. There was the fact that in a surprisingly short time she had begun to regard him as an old friend, and to feel quite at her ease when they were together. One day when Mr. Waring had said to her, "I was sure you would like Armyn as soon as you knew him — he is the best fellow in the world," she had replied without hesitation, "I do like him very much — I have a sincere regard for him." She had uttered the words in the simplest manner, and it did not seem to occur to her that the regard of a beautiful young girl for a lonely man is a dangerous sentiment — for the lonely man.

Having looked for some moments at the miniature, she closed it, sighing a little. Then she leaned back in her seat, crossed her hands in her lap, and fixed her eyes with a melancholy expression upon the grass at her feet. She was thinking of the time when she would go away from Montrose, and the reflection seemed to afford her very little pleasure.

This brief season of rest, with young faces like her own around her, had been an oasis in the desert. She was going back soon now to the restless life of an actress, and that life was more than ever distasteful to her. It is a melancholy circumstance when a girl of seventeen has no home. Papa Melville and herself had no resting-place. It was hotels, hotels, and the never-ending roll of railways, and glaring footlights, and feverish publicity. At first it had been delightful to the child as a brilliant novelty: it had long since lost that charm, and Fanchette shrank from returning to it. Yet she would be compelled to return to it. Papa Melville did not wish her to do so, it was true — but it was her duty. They were poor, and she could not be a burden upon him. So she would soon hear the shouting crowds again, — and laugh, and flit about, and exhibit herself to gaping crowds in that odious, intolerable rôle of *Fanchette*. She would go away from Montrose — would never see any of the faces there any more. She would not even have an opportunity of thanking Armyn again for all his goodness, since, no doubt, Papa Melville would come and take her away before his return. It was very sad. She sighed deeply — when a shadow ran over the grass before her. She looked up, and there was Armyn.

He had arrived in the night train without warning, and had walked from the station, as he often did. Seeing Fanchette on the seat under the oak, he had approached her without attracting her atten-

tion, and she woke from her depressed reverie to see him within a few feet of her, and looking at her with a smile.

Fanchette always gave way to her first impulse. She rose quickly, and met him with both hands held out. Her face glowed with pleasure. When did he arrive? In the morning train? Had he seen Papa Melville? Was he coming soon?

She went back to the seat in the midst of this volley of questions, and drew her dress toward her — a friendly gesture which obviously meant "There is plenty of room." What then ensued Mr. Waring would probably have stigmatized as chatter. As Fanchette felt perfectly at her ease, she asked a multitude of questions, especially in reference to Papa Melville. Armyn informed her that he had seen him in New York, and that he would arrive at Montrose in a few days — he was perfectly well; and then asked if Miss Fanchette had enjoyed herself.

"I have enjoyed myself very much, and I am very glad to see you again!" she exclaimed.

"Very well," said Armyn, "that is a proof that we are friends. I hope your other friends remained and made themselves agreeable?"

"Yes, they remained, and I suppose have made themselves agreeable. I don't know. I have seen very little of them."

"Is it possible?"

"Mr. Winter is dreadfully in love with Louise, and takes not the least notice of me; and poor Mr.

Waring — it is really frightful! He actually does not see me. He is so taken up with Maya that he lives in a dream."

"What a picture of abandonment!" said Armyn. "But you have Mr. Herbert."

"He scarcely looks at me," said Fanchette, with a terrible disregard of truth. "He is cultivating his first mustache, and it absorbs his whole attention. I often inquire about it, it is so very delicate."

"I did not know you were such a satirist. You will make me afraid of you."

"You need not be," said Fanchette, smiling. "I have never seen anything in you to satirize. I was only laughing a little at Mr. Herbert. He is quite agreeable, but certainly a little vain. Now you know that is the privilege of the weaker vessels — as Mr. Waring kindly calls us."

"He was only jesting. No one admires women more. I have often thought how strange it is that he has not been married. It is best for a man of warm feelings to expend them on somebody."

Fanchette looked up at Armyn unconsciously, and the look was full of meaning. His quick eye caught the expression, and he said, —

"Perhaps you do not agree with me."

"Oh, yes," she said, laughing, with a little embarrassment. "I was only thinking."

"Tell me your thought, as the children's game says; it might interest me."

Fanchette hesitated, but said at length, —

"I was thinking — but it would be *too* intrusive."

"I shall not consider anything you say intrusive."

"I thought of asking you a question; but I ought not to be so very unceremonious."

"Forget ceremony, and ask it."

"Then — remember, you have made me speak — why have you never married, Mr. Armyn? You have certainly warm feelings — are you never lonely?"

"Very lonely sometimes," said Armyn, with sudden sadness. He was looking down, but raised his eyes and fixed them on Fanchette with a singular expression. It was full of vague tenderness, and made her heart beat.

"I have pained you," she said, scarcely speaking above a whisper.

"No."

"It was very thoughtless in me. I have reminded you of something that distresses you."

"A little, perhaps; but that is not your fault," he said, quietly. "Every man has something in his past which a word recalls — some source of sadness. Shall I tell you what my own is? I was once very tenderly attached to a human being whom you exactly resemble. It was many years ago, and the attachment was unhappy. She is dead now."

Fanchette's eyes suddenly filled with tears. The sorrowful tones of her companion's voice and his words had moved her deeply.

"You see now why I am alone," he added.

"But you need not be!" she exclaimed, impulsively, looking at him with moist eyes. "Why should you? Why not love some one again — you would find plenty. Don't think me intrusive. You saved my life, and it is natural that I should wish you to be happy."

Armyn looked at the glowing cheeks, and his sorrowful expression gradually disappeared.

"You are not at all intrusive," he said. "You are like the sunshine, and that is never unwelcome."

"I am very glad if I have brought you any sunshine! It is a very great pleasure to me to be told so. I wish I could bring you more," said Fanchette, looking at him with an affectionate smile.

As she spoke, the bell rang for breakfast, and this romantic interview terminated. Armyn rose and went toward the house, accompanied by Fanchette, feeling a strange lightheartedness for which he could not account. The very presence of the girl seemed to act upon him like a charm. His eyes followed all her movements, and seemed to caress her as her own had caressed the violets at her neck. As they reached the terrace he said, —

"You apologized for asking me a question — may I ask *you* one?"

"Yes," said Fanchette, looking up at him with her wonderful eyes.

"Has no one ever told you how beautiful you are — Fanchette?"

It was the first time that he had ever called her Fanchette, and she colored a little.

"You are *very* beautiful!"

She blushed, and attempted to laugh.

"I am not, but I am glad that you think I am," she said.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MR. WARING IS DAZZLED.

AFTER breakfast Armyn went into the drawing-room and laughed and talked with his guests. Then he left them to themselves and retired to the library, where he was soon joined by Waring. That gentleman lit his cigar, established himself comfortably in an easy-chair, and said, —

"Well, we are away from all that clatter of tongues now, and can indulge in intellectual conversation. Tell me about your journey."

"There is not much to tell. I attended to the business — there was a hitch, which is set right. I would rather hear home news from you. All have been well?"

"Distressingly so. A slight diminution of vivacity resulting from temporary indisposition would have been a luxury."

"You are not patient enough for so grand a philosopher. Young people will talk. But I have discovered something that will interest you. Fanchette is Mrs. Delancy's cousin."

"Her cousin!" exclaimed Waring.

"Yes: I have just discovered the fact. It is

strange that the idea never occurred to me, but it did not. John Maurice, her father, was a distant relative of Mrs. Delancy. He wandered off, as I have said, and his family quite lost sight of him, and knew nothing of his marriage. These things happen."

"Is it possible?" said Waring, thoughtfully.

"There is not the least doubt of it. The proofs are indisputable. As soon as I ascertained the relationship, I sat down and wrote to Mrs. Delancy, supposing that she might have returned, and fearing that Papa Melville might come and take the young lady away in my absence. What I wrote was my whole history, — my old sorrowful romance with poor Fanny from first to last. This was necessary as a preface to the request I had determined to make."

"The request?" said Waring, who was listening with the deepest interest.

"I wish Fanchette to leave the stage. I take a natural interest in her, but I am going away, and it is improbable that I shall ever see her again. She dislikes her profession, and I have requested Mrs. Delancy to offer her young cousin a home at Bayside."

"Excellent!"

But after this exclamation, Waring evidently reflected. His expression became dubious.

"I am afraid there are two great obstacles," he said; "not in connection with Mrs. Delancy. She is sure to be delighted. The trouble will be with Fanchette."

"Do you think she will object?"

"I am afraid so. She would shrink from dependence, and would not consent to leave Papa Melville."

"I thought of both obstacles, and I think they can be overcome," said Armyn. "Fanchette would be a real assistance to her cousin in the Bayside establishment, and need not think it a position of dependence. Then as to Mr. Melville, I saw him in New York, and he was warmly in favor of it, and will persuade Fanchette. He is an excellent man."

"He certainly is," Waring said, "and he gave you the strongest proof of his love for Fanchette by agreeing to your proposal. But the trouble, as I said before, will be to induce her to live apart from him. They are father and daughter, as far as feeling goes, and there never was a more devoted daughter than Fanchette."

"Yes," said Armyn, "that is one of the most beautiful traits of her character. But I do not despair of arranging everything. At least I'll make the effort. She must not go back to the stage."

"She will go back if there is a question between her own ease and leaving Papa Melville. You don't know Fanchette. She's perfectly unselfish. You could not delight her more than to arrange matters so that she could live quietly in the country; but if you propose to separate her from Papa Melville, she will refuse."

"Well," said Armyn, thoughtfully, "let us try,

at least. A great many things are done by trying. I shall call on Mrs. Delancy as soon as she returns, and discuss the whole matter. As you have said, there will not probably be any trouble in that direction. She and Louise are devoted to Fanchette, and the girls will be great company for each other, though I am afraid they will not enjoy each other's society much longer."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I think Mrs. Ordmore is going to force the marriage with Prince Seminoff. It has been deferred probably in consequence of Mr. Ordmore's death; but it seems that she is determined to prosecute the affair now, and end it at once."

"Why do you suppose so?"

"In passing through Washington, I had business with the Russian Minister. After transacting my business, which was a mere formality, we discussed the movements of the Nihilists, and the Baron, who is an old acquaintance of mine, referred incidentally to Prince Seminoff and his approaching marriage. The Prince would visit his estates in Russia, he informed me, soon after the ceremony. He had obtained a passport some time before, but had lost or mislaid it. He had just applied for another for himself and *Madame Louise Seminoff* — his marriage was now to take place without delay."

"Is it possible? I hoped that affair had blown over. It is too bad to think of little Louise marrying that rascal!"

"Yes," said Armyn; "but a great many things in this world are *too bad*, my dear Waring. This is one of them, as you say; but it seems that it is going to take place, for all that. I assure you I regret it as much as you do."

"There is a way to prevent it."

"Have you a plan?"

"Fanchette has! It is one of her numerous ideas. She has more sense than all of us — that girl is a phenomenon! Under a frivolous demeanor she conceals a superior intellect! You have done her injustice."

"I am not aware of the fact."

"Her plan is excellent. Listen and let me unfold it, and then you will agree with me that when the weaker vessels concentrate their faculties on a subject, the result is startling."

After this eloquent peroration Mr. Waring proceeded to inform Armyn of Fanchette's "idea" — namely, to bring about a sudden union between Tom Winter and Louise, when the claim of the mother would be defeated by the superior claim of the husband.

"Well, that is an excellent idea — if it can only be carried out," Armyn replied. "The difficulty will be, I think, in persuading Colonel Delancy."

"Yes."

"Still he might be persuaded."

"Use your influence, Armyn. He is an old friend of yours, and Tom will be grateful to you for life."

"I will do so with pleasure — young people ought to marry; and if you have no objection I will apply the maxim to yourself."

"To *me?*"

"Why not?"

Mr. Waring blushed slightly and looked a little confused. He was a man of the world — but then he was very much in love.

"The idea!"

"It is not such a bad idea! You are much too lonely for your own good — and shall I recommend somebody? She is very sweet, and you must acknowledge that she is decidedly pretty! If you indulge a preference for good blood, I can inform you that this somebody belongs to the highest *caste* — a term expressing a great deal in her country."

Mr. Waring strove to conceal his blushes behind the smoke of his cigar, and only muttered something.

"Come, think of it — do better," said Armyn, laughing: "go back to the East with us."

"Are you in earnest, Armyn?" exclaimed Mr. Waring.

"Perfectly. Why should you not? You even proposed it yourself one day — were you in jest or earnest? The East is a superb post for a special correspondent. You have nothing to detain you here — you are as free as a hawk. Come! — the beautiful Orient and stirring scenes await you; and besides, there will be a dove in the yacht to keep the hawk company."

Mr. Waring's face assumed the expression of a gentleman whose eyes are dazzled by some overpowering light. To embark on the yacht with Maya, and be near her during a long sea voyage; to sit with her on deck and see the sun set, the moon rise! To be alone, alone with Maya day after day, month after month possibly! — it was no wonder that a gentleman in Mr. Waring's condition should be dazzled.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, assuming a theatrical air to conceal his confusion; "what a proposal, — it is not to be thought of! That is to say, I will reflect upon it!"

And from the absent and excited expression of his countenance, Mr. Waring seemed to be already reflecting. Why not? he appeared to be asking himself. There was absolutely no reason whatever why he should not go to the East as special correspondent of his journal. He could return in a year or two if he grew tired, and re-appear in society with a long beard and a romantically bronzed complexion. And when to this dream was added another — that he might bring back an Oriental maiden in the character of Mrs. Waring — his resolution to go was almost made up. Could he discuss the subject through the medium of signs and dumb show with Maya? Could he make her understand, and would she telegraph in response that the prospect was attractive to her?

Mr. Waring blushed slightly, and made up his mind that he would try on the very next day. He

did not announce this intention, however, to his friend. He uttered his favorite glittering generalities, and took refuge behind his cigar-smoke.

"Well, think of it, and determine to go with us, dear Waring," said Armyn. "There are few things that would give me as much pleasure, I assure you. We will talk of it at another time, and discuss the matter in all its lights. There is no time now. I hear carriage-wheels."

He went to the window which opened on the terrace, and said, —

"It is Colonel Delancy. They have returned."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

COLONEL DELANCY PROMISES TO KEEP A SECRET FROM HIS WIFE.

THE Bayside carriage stopped in front of the terrace, and Colonel Delancy got out of it. If Louise, who ran to meet him, had felt any uneasiness at not seeing her mother, his cheerful face was sufficient to dissipate it. Father and daughter exchanged an affectionate kiss, and Louise exclaimed, —

"Where is mama, papa? When did you get back?"

"We arrived last night, my dear. Your mama has a headache. We have been travelling day and night. Your poor aunt died soon after we reached her, and we stayed to the funeral. Such things are very sorrowful, but then at my age they are nothing new. The best way is to be cheerful. Have you enjoyed yourself? How fresh you look! And there is Miss Fanchette and Mr. Armyn; Mr. Winter, too, and Mr. Herbert!"

And the chirping old Colonel shook hands with everybody with his usual bonhomie. He was a very gay old boy, with his gray side-whiskers and twinkling eyes. He made an agreeable impression

wherever he went, and had a friendly look even for his rival, Tom Winter.

He brought a message from Mrs. Delancy to Fanchette that she must come back to Bayside with Louise, and spend some days with her. This the Colonel had been instructed to request as a special favor, and he urged Fanchette to accept the invitation with a great deal of old-world gallantry and affection. As Louise put her arms around her friend and also urged her, informing her that Mr. Armyn would give his permission, Fanchette laughed, and ended by consenting.

"By the bye, I have a note," said the Colonel, as the girls went to get ready to go back with him. He drew it from his pocket and gave it to Armyn. It was from Mrs Delancy, and begged him to call and see her on the next day, if it was convenient to do so.

"I will with great pleasure," said Armyn, bowing. He then said, —

"Will you come into the library with me for a moment, my dear Colonel?"

They went into the library, and Armyn closed the door, leaving Waring and his two companions to discuss this portentous and sudden flitting of two members of the group of Arcadians.

Mr. Herbert stated that his presence was necessary at home, and if Tom Winter had business in town, he had better return with him. Tom Winter looked disconsolate, and said he believed he *ought to* go back; and this sudden necessity of terminat-

ing their visit to Montrose having been fully recognized, Mr. Herbert suggested that they should spend the evening at Bayside. If they were urged to do so, they might possibly spend the night, and leave in the morning.

Mr. Waring was listening with great enjoyment to this colloquy when Armyn and Colonel Delancy came out of the library. It was evident, from the expression of the Colonel's face, that something had been communicated to him which surprised and excited him. Waring saw the expression, and wondered what had caused it. It was plain, from Mrs. Delancy's invitation to Armyn to visit her, that she had received his letter. She must have shown it to Colonel Delancy; therefore Fanchette's parentage was no secret. It was not the announcement, then, that Fanchette was the daughter of John Maurice and Fanny Dearing which had brought that look of animation to the face of the old gentleman. What was it? Unfortunately Mr. Waring could not even frame a conjecture.

As they came out of the library, Waring heard Armyn say to Colonel Delancy, —

"Remember, my dear Colonel, all this is confidential."

"Certainly, certainly."

"I have your promise."

"Yes."

The Colonel sighed. Then he said, in a hesitating manner, —

"Would you object to — she is a person of great discretion — I mean Mrs. Delancy."

"I am sure of that; but this is so purely an affair of business —"

"That is true. I will not then mention it even to Mrs. Delancy," the Colonel said, ruefully. He was for the first time in his life keeping a secret from his wife.

A few minutes afterwards Fanchette and Louise came down, accompanied by the disconsolate Maya, whose eyes were full of tears.

"Farewell to the roses of Montrose; at least to two of them," said Mr. Waring in a mournful manner, as they got into the carriage.

"One is left — take good care of her," whispered Fanchette, bending over.

And seeing that these words had quite silenced Mr. Waring's heroics, she said to Armyn, sadly, —

"I am very sorry to go — it is like leaving home."

Armyn bowed, and the carriage rolled away.

On the same afternoon Mr. Winter and Mr. Herbert made their adieus to their host, forgetting to mention that they proposed to stop at Bayside.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHAT ARMYN DID NOT KNOW.

WHEN Armyn went to Bayside on the following day Mrs Delancy was awaiting him in the drawing-room, which was full of the odor of spring flowers.

As he entered she came to meet him, with her face full of emotion, and holding out her hand.

"Yes, indeed! That is my reply to your letter, Mr. Armyn," she said. "Did you think I could make any other? Yes, indeed — with all my heart!"

"I was sure of it, my dear Mrs. Delancy. And does Fanchette consent?"

"I am afraid there will be great trouble. She burst into tears, and said she could never leave her Papa Melville."

"I expected that, but he will come soon, and may persuade her. I shall not go away satisfied if she remains on the stage."

"I can understand that very well after your letter. What a strange, sad story! It affected me very much. And your meeting with Fanchette — how singular it was!"

"Very singular."

"I have told her everything, as you did not request me not to do so."

"I am very sorry I did not; it was a very great error in me," said Armyn.

"It could scarcely have been avoided, and will do no harm, unless you object to having a warm place in Fanchette's heart."

The lady smiled and looked at Armyn, but his face told her nothing.

"I should be very glad to think that I had it," said Armyn, quietly. "It is natural that I should value her attachment, but we shall not see much of each other in future. I shall leave the country in a few days, and go away quite satisfied now. I think Fanchette will stay."

"She has consented to remain for the summer, at least."

"That is a great point gained. I hope the permanent arrangement will be made."

"I trust so, indeed. It would be very hard to give her up now; and when you return from the East I hope you will find her at Bayside."

Mrs. Delancy again looked at Armyn with a covert smile, apparently anxious to ascertain what effect her words produced. To explain this circumstance, only a few words are necessary. Mrs. Delancy was an ardent match-maker, and thought that nothing would be more natural than a marriage between Armyn and Fanchette. Was such an event probable? Fanchette was certainly attached to him, and it was not a very wild supposition that

he returned her affection. It was not improbable, indeed, that he had passed the limits of mere attachment, and the object of the excellent lady now was to discover Armyn's secret, if he had a secret.

"You will not be absent more than a year, I hope," she said. "Do come back and live among your own people, Mr. Armyn. There is nothing like home, you know, and the faces of old friends."

"That is very true," said Armyn. "I shall come back, I hope, some day."

"Some day is very far off! — I shall expect you next spring at farthest; and you will then find Fanchette looking much prettier than at present. Girls improve very much after they pass seventeen — that is Fanchette's age now. What do you think of her?"

"I think she is very beautiful and very warm-hearted," said Armyn.

"And then she is so brilliant. She has one of the quickest minds I have ever known."

And Mrs. Delancy proceeded to praise everything connected with Fanchette, with the innocent object of impressing the subject on her visitor. Her face glowed, — it was from a mixture of affection and love of match-making, — and Armyn listened quietly for about an hour, agreeing with everything. Then he rose and bowed.

"You are not going?" said Mrs. Delancy; "do not go until you see Fanchette."

Armyn smiled, as he had done throughout the whole interview, and said, —

"I am sorry that I am obliged to do so."

"You have not even asked for her!"

"I meet your reproach, my dear Mrs. Delancy, by the reply that she has not been down to see me!"

"She will return very soon. You must not go. She will never forgive me."

"She is not at home, then?"

"She and Louise have walked out — I did not tell her that you were coming. I wished it to be a surprise — to leave the impression that you were making a friendly visit to *her*."

"That was very amiable," said Armyn, laughing; "but you see the terrible result. I am going away, and she will miss the immense satisfaction of seeing me!"

"Do stay a little longer, Mr. Armyn. I am sure Fanchette is desperately tired of Mr. Herbert by this time. He and Mr. Winter stayed last night, and were to go this morning, but did not do so."

"Mr. Herbert admires Fanchette, I believe? It would be a very good match," said Armyn. "But that is an affair which does not concern me, dear Mrs. Delancy. You have mentioned Mr. Winter — he is a very fine fellow in whom I take a great deal of interest. I am sorry that something that has recently come to my knowledge threatens him with unhappiness — and your daughter too."

"Louise!" exclaimed Mrs. Delancy.

Colonel Delancy came in at the moment, and shook hands cordially with Armyn.

"What were you saying about Louise?" he asked.

"Mr. Armyn has something to tell us, my dear!"

"Something to tell us?"

"About Louise!"

"The result of a visit to the Russian Minister," said Armyn. He then spoke of his interview, and the Baron's communication. Prince Seminoff had certainly applied for a passport for himself and *Madame Louise Seminoff*. There seemed to be no doubt of the fact that Mrs. Ordmore intended to claim the custody of the young lady, and to effect her marriage with Prince Seminoff without delay. It was proper that this fact should be known to Colonel Delancy, Armyn said — he had forgotten to mention it, as he intended to do, when the Colonel was at Bayside.

Having communicated these particulars in a more hurried manner than seemed necessary, Armyn bowed, took his leave, and rode away.

Colonel Delancy had scarcely observed the unusual haste in the air of his visitor. He was thinking of what had been communicated to him, and looked quite aghast. He had begun to indulge the impression that Mrs. Ordmore had given up her project, and now this was suddenly seen to be a mere illusion. Since Louise's name was inserted in the passport, the plan was not given up, but evidently regarded as a fixed fact.

They discussed it for an hour in a very depressed

manner. What was to be done? Then Mrs. Delancy, into whom Fanchette had instilled her views, suggested the *coup de main* of the marriage with Mr. Tom Winter. Thereat the Colonel lifted his hands in utter astonishment and dismay. Impossible! — Louise was a mere child — it would never do. What an idea! Who had suggested it? She was actually a baby — she was only nineteen!

"I was only eighteen when we were married, my dear," said Mrs. Delancy.

This shot nearly dismounted Colonel Delancy's artillery, but like a good soldier he stood his ground and fought obstinately to the last. The passport might, after all, be a mere matter of form. The Prince had no doubt procured it in case it might possibly be necessary. There was no proof whatever that Mrs. Ordmore would proceed to hard measures, and there would be quite time enough when an effort was made to take Louise away from them. No, it could not be thought of. He had no objection whatever to Mr. Winter; but — Louise was young, and they could wait.

Mrs. Delancy understood perfectly well what this meant. Between the lines of the Colonel's discourse she read, "I don't mean to give up Louise until I am obliged to." Like an intelligent person, therefore, she did not put herself to the trouble of confuting the Colonel's views, but directed the conversation to the subject of Fanchette. At this the Colonel's gloom cleared up. He did not allow himself to be depressed for any length of time by anything.

"Well, I'm very glad she has come, and I hope she will stay with us, my dear," he said; "especially as Louise is so fond of her."

"I do not know that she will. Some one might take her away from us."

"Take her away!"

Mrs. Delancy said, with a quiet smile, —

"Mr. Armyn loves her dearly, and does not know it!"

When Armyn reached Montrose, he found Waring lounging on the terrace and smoking a cigar. He demanded an account of the visit, listened in silence, and said, —

"Well, perhaps Papa Melville may persuade her to stay, after worrying about it. As to Tom and the young Louise, I have a presentiment that things are coming to a crisis."

"It would seem so."

"I have another presentiment also," said Mr. Waring in a matter-of-fact voice.

"What is that?"

"That events of importance are about to occur in the future destiny of an humble man of letters. He is fated to become a great traveller and special correspondent *in partibus infidelium* — that's the Latin, I think, for the Orient."

"You have made up your mind, Waring! You are going with us! That is good news indeed!"

"Yes, I'm going," said Mr. Waring, dropping his affected indifference, "to the sunny East, — the

land of the Orient, and so forth. I am weary of the tame routine of politics and society. The times are out of joint, and it's no business of mine to set things to rights. This era of good stealing has no attractions for a man of my lofty views. — When do you sail?"

"In a week. You make me happier than I can tell you. If you have any arrangements to make, it would be better to make them at once."

"I will do so without delay," Mr. Waring exclaimed, with animation. "They won't amount to much. A few pecuniary obligations about town demand my attention. I have means to pay up, I think — if not, I shall resort to elimination."

"Elimination — what is that?"

"Is it possible you are so much behind the age as to ask that question? Elimination is — elimination: the great modern discovery how not to pay one's debts. It expresses the idea in an elegant manner."

"What idea?"

"The idea of — eliminating. You owe a certain amount of money, let us say to your tailor — I do — and his little bill has been standing for seven years. Now listen. The physiologists tell us that every seven years a man's body is transformed — he becomes some one else. I apply that great principle to my pecuniary affairs. I am not the individual that contracted that little obligation. It was contracted by another; but I do not wish to appear illiberal. As an evidence of my esteem, I pay my

tailor one half his bill. In other words, I eliminate the rest."

"And that is elimination, is it? Well, I have only to say, dear friend, that I think you might find a shorter word."

"Don't mention it! It is inelegant! Elimination is the term. After the process, I shall run on to New York and make arrangements for a special correspondence from the Orient."

"Suppose, after you have written the letters, they *eliminate* your salary?"

"Shocking thought! Don't suggest it. The very idea of such dishonesty is revolting. Well, to come back to business, this is about all I will have to attend to. I'll buy a carpet-bag and a box of paper collars, and be ready."

The prospect of becoming a carpet-bagger seemed to fire Mr. Waring's imagination.

"I'll set out this very evening, and be back in four days!" he exclaimed.

And on that very evening, after an interview with one of his friends in the drawing-room, which Armyn did not intrude upon, the last of the Arcadians took his flight from Montrose.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A VERY OLD STORY.

AFTER Waring's departure, absolute quiet reigned at Montrose. Anonda and Maya were rarely seen, and passed like shadows; and Armyn was engaged in making preparations for his sea voyage. The crew of the yacht would consist of the 'longshoremen, and Armyn, who was a good seaman, would take command. The little craft was overhauled from stem to stern, and put in thorough order. Then she was despatched to the nearest port, to be victualled and obtain a clearance. She would return in about a week. Then Armyn meant to sail without further delay.

He had not been to Bayside again after his interview with Mrs. Delancy. The arrangements in connection with the yacht afforded a plausible explanation of this apparent unfriendliness. But now the yacht had gone away, and he had plenty of leisure. It was a very slight matter to mount his horse and ride over to Bayside. Instead of doing so, he rode out nearly every morning in the opposite direction, along the shore of the bay, through the fields and pines, — along the strand, watching the

surf, — anywhere, — and without an object, it seemed.

It was curious that a man of such activity and energy should waste his time in this aimless wandering and irrational idleness. It certainly was not good for him, since, instead of bringing a healthful color to his face, which is the result of horseback exercise, he had grown rather pale, and seemed far from happy. Was he sorry, after all, to leave his quiet life at Montrose and embark once more on the restless current? Only two or three months before, he had looked forward to the time when he would return to the East with a glad heart. Now it really did seem, from a glance at his face, that he had suddenly lost his interest in all connected with it.

He often took long rides through a pine forest stretching southward from Montrose — that is to say, in the direction opposite to Bayside. This forest was a melancholy waste, which seemed to have been there for centuries. The enormous trunks stood close together, and shot aloft without branches; below was a brown carpet, and the sunshine scarcely penetrated to the narrow and winding bridle-paths. There was something mournful, almost lugubrious, in these silent solitudes; but Armyn seemed to like them, and spent hour after hour in aimless excursions there. One day he was riding slowly along with his rein on his horse's neck, when he heard the sound of hoofs in front, and caught the flash of a woman's dress. Fan-

chette, escorted by Mr. Charley Herbert, who had returned to Bayside to flutter around the flame, came at a gallop out of a side road, and nearly ran against Armyn. Her face was full of roses, and her yellow hair fell in a coil behind her shoulders from under her riding-hat.

"Mr. Armyn!" she cried, her face glowing with pleasure, "we have been to Montrose to look for you! You would not come to see me, so I went to see you! Where in the world are you going?"

Armyn colored in spite of himself, but shook hands with Fanchette, and then with Mr. Charley Herbert, with great cordiality.

"So you have been to Montrose," he said. "It is rather dreary, I am afraid, now that everybody is gone. Did you see Maya? Mr. Waring has gone away. I suppose you know that he is going to the East with us?"

"Miss Milly told me. Are you going so soon? I have never realized it."

Fanchette's face had suddenly lost every trace of gayety.

"You have not been to see us. Are you going to stay away until you come to say good-by? You would not wait for me the other day — I was very much hurt. It was very unkind!"

"I have been engaged — getting the yacht ready to go," Armyn said.

"You would not wait when you knew how much I wished to see you!"

"That is very amiable. But I have really had a great many things to attend to."

Fanchette looked at him earnestly.

"You do not look well," she said. "You are quite pale."

"I am perfectly well."

Fanchette continued to look at him with the same earnest expression. Something evidently puzzled her, and filled her with a vague sadness.

"You do not look at all well," she repeated. "You need somebody to cheer you up — come and go back with us!"

Armyn laughed — it was a great effort to do so — and shook his head.

"I am very much obliged — not to-day. You see I am going in precisely the opposite direction."

"Then come very soon."

She went up close to him, and said in a whisper almost, her eyes swimming, "I felt your going away the other day very much — Cousin Ellen has told me everything."

Armyn bowed, but made no reply. And a few moments afterwards Fanchette and her gallant escort Mr. Herbert had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW, AND WHAT FOLLOWED IT.

BAYSIDE, *Tuesday*

"Do come and see me this morning, dear Mr. Armyn. Colonel Delancy is anxious to consult you upon a matter of great importance. Pardon this hasty note, and believe me

"Yours sincerely,

"ELLEN DELANCY."

Armyn received this note soon after breakfast, and was very much puzzled by it. What was the matter of great importance, which seemed pressing, as Mrs. Delancy's note was evidently written in great haste? Could this consultation refer to anything in connection with Fanchette? It was probable — but what was he to be consulted about? The note gave him not the least clue. One thing only was plain, that he was fated to go and see Fanchette whether he wished to do so or not; and writing in reply to the note that he would be at Bayside in an hour, he ordered his horse.

An hour afterwards he was in sight of the house.

"After all," he muttered, "a man ought to be able to school his face."

He rode in and dismounted. The sight of Bayside was enough to drive away melancholy thoughts. The whole aspect of the place was cheerful; and the lawn, the verandah, the windows, were a world of flowers. In the middle of the green grass-plat in front of the house, the large wicker basket was a mass of bloom, and resembled a gigantic bouquet.

As Armyn reached the middle of the grass-plat, a figure passed quickly across the windows of the drawing-room, came out of the front door, and ran to meet him. It was Fanchette, but not the Fanchette of the pine-woods with the twist of hair flowing down her back, surmounted by the jaunty riding-hat. She wore a light calico dress which was very becoming to her slim figure, and her slender waist was encircled by a broad belt. Around her neck was a fringe of lace relieved against her throat. Her yellow hair was braided, and piled above her forehead, and on one of her wrists, coming out from the falling sleeve, was the bracelet containing the picture. About the whole face and figure of Fanchette there was something which suggested the spring.

"So you have come at last!" she said, holding out her hand. "I thought you were never coming! Have you quite forgotten me?"

Poor Armyn! He had gotten himself into trouble indeed. He had prepared himself for an interview with Fanchette the volatile, not with this maiden, blushing faintly as she looked at him out of

a pair of large, sad eyes, smiling in a manner that was anything but gay.

"Cousin Ellen told me she had written to you to come and see her this morning — she has ridden out, but wishes you to stay until she comes back. Thanks to the note, you have come to see us at last, sir! — but I am scolding, and I won't scold! I have you all to myself now: come and sit down and talk to me."

Her eyes were fixed upon him with an expression which made his heart beat, and he went back with her to the verandah and sat down, feeling that it would require all his strength to refrain from saying to Fanchette something which he would afterwards be very sorry for. In fact, the incident was one of those surprises which try the nerves. Nothing could have been more unexpected than this interview with Fanchette on a May day full of flowers and sunshine, on the quiet verandah. He had come, at Mrs. Delancy's summons, to discuss a matter of business, expecting to see Fanchette, of course, but in the midst of a group of people — and now they were alone together; she was looking at him with an expression of innocent fondness, and saying to him — to *him* — "I have you all to myself now: come and sit down and talk to me!" In spite of himself, he smiled at the exquisite comedy of the situation.

"Well, you see I have come at last," he said; "a busy man cannot always consult his own wishes in regard to his movements. I have had a great deal to do to get the yacht ready for sailing."

"I know that," she replied, her head drooping. "It is a great distress to me — I mean, to think of your going. It is very hard. Cousin Ellen has told me everything, and why you have been so good to me. I am *very* grateful."

The faltering voice went to Armyn's heart, and tried his resolution to the utmost.

There is no reason why you should be especially grateful to me," he said. "It was a question of duty, and I hope that nothing will induce you to feel any sense of obligation. That would be very unpleasant to me — let us not say any more about it. Tell me that you will leave the stage and live with your family, and I shall go away satisfied."

"I cannot," said Fanchette, with tears in her eyes. "I could never leave Papa Melville. He has no one but me, and has loved me and taken care of me since I was a child. I could not leave him."

"He will be the first to urge you. He is warmly in favor of your living at Bayside. Believe me, it will be the best for you."

"I cannot leave him," said Fanchette.

Armyn looked at her for some moments without speaking. He then said, —

"You will remain until the end of summer, at least?"

"Yes: I have promised Cousin Ellen, who is very good to me. Papa Melville has written that he is coming to see me in two or three days, and will stop whenever he passes during the summer."

"Then that is arranged. I hope you will change your mind, and I think you will be induced to do so. It would be a very great unhappiness to me to think that you were going back to the stage. It is not your proper place. But all that can be left to the future. I am sure you are happier here among your own people."

"I have been very happy," said Fanchette. "My visit to Montrose was like a sudden change in my life. It seems very strange that so much should have happened in so short a time. Yes, I am very happy, but there is something which makes me very unhappy indeed. You are going away from us."

"I am sorry — I must. I have my work to do," said Armyn, in a low tone.

"You advise me to stay with my home people — you might stay too," she murmured.

"I am a man; and a man has his career to follow. He must do what he thinks is his duty, and I have mine."

"It is very hard," she repeated, drawing a long breath, and looking sorrowfully at him. "It has all been very strange. I was attracted to you at our first meeting — when you came to see me to return my bracelet; and then you saved my life! Without you I never should have been here in this happy home."

"Very well, you are here at last," said Armyn, smiling. "All these affectionate people are *your* people and love you."

"It is all very sweet," murmured Fanchette, refusing to be cheered; "but there is something that spoils it all. You are going away. I wish you would not go!"

"I must."

"Why must you? I have not had many people to love me — for you must love me a little by this time, I am sure. Do you not?"

"How can you ask me?" said Armyn with a throb of the heart.

"Well," said Fanchette, looking up at him with a wistful smile, "I was not very certain, you know. I knew you pitied me, as people pity a helpless person without friends. I am not certain I would like that. It is not like loving one."

"I love you very sincerely," said Armyn in an agitated voice. He was nearly verifying the distich of his friend Waring, and losing his head; but Fanchette did not seem to observe his emotion.

"That is very good in you," she said. "It would be strange if I did not love *you*. I have thought of you a hundred times this spring — before I came to Montrose, I mean. Perhaps it was because I had your picture to remind me of you."

She opened the medallion and showed him the miniature.

"When I lost it that day I was more distressed than I can tell you. I have worn it since I was a child, and kissed it a thousand times. When I missed it I felt as if I had lost a part of myself."

Armyn made no reply. He was afraid that Fanchette would hear the beating of his heart.

"You see I am entering into an explanation of what ought to be very flattering to you," she went on. "It is always flattering to be told that people love us, is it not? I love *you* very much — you see I do not say that I *like* you. I believe I would rather say *love*, and have you tell me that you *love* me too — a little at least. Is that too much to ask? It is so good to be loved! — and I have not had a great many people to really love me. It is natural that I should feel toward you in a different way than toward other people. You saved my life, to begin with — and that is a great favor! And then you were so kind to me at Montrose!"

Fanchette smiled. She was almost like her old self as she chattered. Her mood might have been taken for gayety if there had not been tears in her eyes.

"I often think of that day on the deck of the yacht while the wind was blowing. Then I remember all the happy times at dear old Montrose, and how I met you there that morning under the oak tree, when you called me Fanchette. Have you forgotten that?"

"I remember it very well," said Armyn in a low voice.

"And all is over now — I shall not see you there any more."

Her voice faltered, and looking at him earnestly, she exclaimed, —

"Don't go! I can't bear to think of your going — how can I do without you!"

These words nearly finished the unfortunate individual to whom they were addressed. If they had been the result of mere coquetry he would have laughed; but they were perfectly sincere. Fanchette had never been more serious in her life than at this moment. He saw that, and read so much real affection in her eyes that his face filled with blood. What a comedy! To be told by Fanchette that *she* loved *him!* — to be asked if he did not love her — to have the woman who was now dearer to him than all the rest of the world besides, indulge in these innocent expressions of feeling at his departure! Fanchette was pitiless, and put the climax to everything in one sentence. Laying her hand upon his arm, she looked at him with flushed cheeks and pleading eyes.

"You would not go away if you knew how much I love you!"

What the result of this final appeal would have been, remains a mystery. A sudden interruption came and put an end to the interview. The Bayside carriage drove up to the door, and Colonel and Mrs. Delancy got out of it. Their faces exhibited a suppressed excitement, and the Colonel held a paper in his hand. Mrs. Delancy approached Armyn, and said, hurriedly, —

"I am very glad you came. We wished to consult with you, but Colonel Delancy afterwards determined to go at once and obtain the license."

Armyn looked greatly bewildered.

"For Louise and Mr. Winter's marriage," said the lady. "Colonel Delancy will tell you about it."

"It is all very simple," said the Colonel, with a rueful smile. "The young folks have cornered me at last, or rather Mrs. Ordmore has done so. She has sued out a writ of *habeas corpus* to get possession of Louise, and I have sued out a marriage license which will prove a bar to further proceedings."

Fanchette sprang forward and caught the paper from his hands. Her face glowed, and her eyes sparkled.

"It is unnecessary to examine the document, my dear. It is in regular form," said the Colonel. "It is a great relief to have it all over. I have been really pestered to death, and my mind is at ease now. I hope your friend Mr. Winter, in whose favor you suggested this proceeding, will not object. I have telegraphed to him. If he will be kind enough to come, we can have the ceremony over at once."

"And if you choose, my dear Fanchette," said Mrs. Delancy, smiling, "you may be first bridesmaid — and Mr. Armyn might be first groomsman."

CHAPTER XL.

ON GUARD.

ALL was excitement at Bayside, and Armyn took his departure quietly, selecting the moment when Fanchette had rushed up-stairs to communicate the extraordinary intelligence to Louise.

The tears had suddenly dried in Fanchette's eyes, and that volatile young creature was herself again. She was full of agitation and delight at the approaching ceremony. Her tongue ran on incessantly, and it is certain that if Mr. Waring had been present, he would have stopped his ears. But then Mr. Waring was only a man, and Fanchette was a girl, and, to such, a wedding occasion is exciting. The house was turned upside down, and there was an incessant running to and fro. Louise's wedding dress was to be made, and the guests were to be invited at once — for Colonel Delancy had resolved that his niece's marriage should be an open and public affair. It would take place two days from that time, and Mr. and Mrs. Winter would proceed to the capital for the purpose of calling upon Mrs. Ordmore. By the afternoon the arrangements were in full progress; and Colonel Delancy had

promised to despatch the telegram for Mr. Waring, who was to be a groomsman.

Fanchette was to be Armyn's bridesmaid — he thought of that fact ruefully. He had firmly resolved that he would go to Bayside only once before sailing; and lo! he had gone on this morning, and was going again on the next day. And even that was very far from being all. His private interview with Fanchette on that morning was the result of circumstances. He might visit the family a hundred times, and not again find himself alone with her. It is difficult to secure a private interview with one member of the family in a country house — it is nearly always possible to avoid it, if one wishes to do so. But to be a young lady's groomsman! That is quite a different thing. The official known as "groomsman" in America, and as "best man" in England, has stated duties which it is impossible to neglect. He must devote himself to the society of his bridesmaid; go in to supper with her, and dance with her if she wishes to dance. If the heat of the rooms is unpleasant, he must offer his arm, and escort her to the portico and the moonlight. It is customary.

This was what Armyn now saw before him. He and Fanchette were going to be thrown together for many hours. He was to be her special attendant, and dedicate himself to her service. It was nearly certain that they would be alone together more than once — and what was going to result from that fact? Armyn asked himself. With all his coolness

and self-possession he was a little agitated. The interview on the verandah had tried him to the utmost, and he was unwilling to be subjected to a test even more dangerous. In fact, every objection to seeing more of Fanchette was now intensified. She would probably greet any exhibition of his real feelings with utter astonishment. Her sentiment toward him was affectionate friendship, and no more; and the very frankness with which she had opened her heart to him was the greatest of dangers. How could he bear to be told again that she "loved him very much"? The words were a proof that she did not love him; and she would doubtless repeat the same assurance to him in other interviews, and end by discovering that she had been playing with edged tools.

"Edged tools, indeed," he muttered with a grim smile — "but it is not Fanchette's fingers that are going to be cut by them! Well, let me take care — there is no especial reason why I should perform a part in a ridiculous comedy."

And he rode on rapidly, and reached Montrose again. After tea he shut himself up in the library, and concentrated his mind on hard work. This continued until midnight, when horses' hoofs were heard without; and Waring, who had found a horse awaiting him at the station, entered. The friends exchanged a grasp of the hand, and Armyn explained all the arrangements for the wedding.

"Maya will be your bridesmaid, unless you prefer some one else," he said, "and I took the

liberty of saying that I thought you would be satisfied."

Mr. Waring glanced at his friend in a curious manner, and said, —

"I am glad of one thing, Armyn."

"What is that?"

"That you keep up your good spirits, like Mr. Tapley, under difficulties."

"Difficulties?"

"Leaving Fanchette," said Waring in a deliberate tone, and looking at his friend. But Armyn did not wince. He had schooled his face, and it was impenetrable.

"What an idea!" he said, quietly; "I understand your meaning, and nothing could be more absurd."

"Absurd? What is absurd? To love Fanchette? It is the most rational of proceedings. In the first place, what is the chief end of woman? To love and be loved. If that is not what they were sent into the world for, what is their mission? — I simply ask for information. Now, Fanchette is one of these angels, and it is the duty of somebody to become enamoured of her. I will add that you are that somebody; and seeing your duty, you have performed it!"

Mr. Waring laughed in triumph, and said, —

"Come, acknowledge it."

"What?" said Armyn, indifferently.

"That you love the very rosettes on Fanchette's slippers, my dear fellow! Why not tell her so,

and ask her if it is convenient to her to reciprocate? The arrangement would be charming, if you could induce her to join our little excursion — I mean the voyage to the sunny East on the 'Fanchette,' which we could rechristen your yacht. You have referred to the pleasure to be derived from the society of another angel — furnish her with a companion!"

For the first time Armyn exhibited some emotion. Waring's words drew an enticing picture — Fanchette married to him, and accompanying him to the East! But the slight color disappeared from his face a moment afterwards.

"Unfortunately your imagination has carried you away, my dear Waring," he said; "it is the merest fancy that I will ever marry any one. And as to this young lady — she would think you were a lunatic if you suggested such a thing. Now tell me about your visit to the capital. Is there any news? The fact is, I am a little tired of the monotony of country life — I want action!"

CHAPTER XLI.

A SENSATION.

LOUISE'S marriage was to take place at sunset, and as that hour approached, the cheerful house of Bayside began to fill with friends to witness the ceremony. It is a very social and affectionate society, this Eastern Shore of Maryland, and the best features of the old régime still linger there and make life attractive. As elsewhere, the civil war had rather changed the style of living than the character of the people. The old planters with their serene helpmates, and the little beauties, their daughters, who flocked to Bayside, were hearty people, with a kind or laughing word for everybody, and had come to see Louise married from a genuine interest in and sympathy with their neighbors.

Merry and kind-hearted persons, however well bred, make a great deal of noise. But then, noise is customary at weddings, and even *de rigueur*. It shows that people enjoy themselves and wish the new couple long life and happiness. The party at Bayside seemed to say so by their hearty laughter and air of enjoyment. They filled the drawing-room, the verandah, the grounds, and, figuratively, saluted the auspicious occasion.

Armyn had arrived with Waring and Maya about an hour before, and Maya had hastened upstairs to the retreat of the prospective bride. The Eastern maiden wore a white dress, and her black hair was a monument of Miss Milly's taste. As to Mr. Waring, he had done nothing but look at it during the whole ride from Montrose, except at intervals when he was engaged in looking into the young lady's eyes. Armyn now and then surprised these glances, and smiled quietly. There was not the least doubt, he said to himself, that his friend Waring's sea-voyage would be a cheerful one. If Mr. Waring's glances were decidedly tell-tale, Maya's were suspicious. They were certainly full of a lurking amusement, but they were unquestionably encouraging. And Armyn, thinking of another pair of eyes which he would soon see no longer, fell into one of his sad moods, and suppressed a sigh.

Precisely at sunset, the Bayside carriage drove up to the door and stopped. The windows were down, and it was impossible to see whom it contained. But that fact was unimportant in the eyes of the young gentlemen who had hung around the verandah and assisted each beauty from her vehicle as she arrived. No doubt Colonel Delancy had sent his carriage for some young lady in want of a vehicle — and the gentlemen gallantly hastened to open the door and hold out their hands, smiling.

Papa Melville got out of the carriage — Papa Melville, in irreproachable broadcloth, a white

cravat and a black hat. He executed a grand bow as he reached the ground, and the young men retired, laughing.

He had received Fanchette's telegram, and set out from New York at once; and Fanchette, who had completed her toilet, seeing him through the window, rushed to meet him.

Thence an accident which for an instant filled the minds of the crowd with apprehensions of the most serious consequences. Fanchette had expended about two hours upon her toilet, and had been surveying herself in the mirror when Papa Melville arrived. What she saw seemed to satisfy her. It was a rosy face, and a pair of red lips, which parted showing her white teeth. At each temple was a single curl of a brilliant straw color. Above her forehead her hair was puffed and piled up in a glossy cone. Her bare shoulders and arms were dazzling. She wore her bracelet, and a single diamond at her throat — Mrs. Delancy's present. As to her dress, that was a white silk, the property of Louise; and from the skirt appeared her slippers with red rosettes and very high heels. These latter were now the cause of Fanchette's misfortune.

Having seen Papa Melville get out of the carriage, Fanchette rushed through the chaos around her, very nearly overturning the bride as she did so, and hastened down the staircase to meet him. It is not good to hasten down staircases with the heels which are now worn, and Fanchette was unlucky. One of her heels caught in the staircase when she

had nearly reached the bottom, and she fell forward, causing the crowd who witnessed her accident to utter exclamations.

A gentleman rushed to her rescue — Mr. Charles Herbert, who was present among the guests. He received Fanchette in his arms, and his face glowed with pleasure; but the incident seemed to affect the young lady in a very different manner. As she "reposed upon his bosom" — Mr. Waring's expression afterwards — she raised her head and saw Armyn looking at her with a smile. Thereupon Fanchette colored with sudden ill-humor, and repulsed Mr. Herbert. She looked very angry, and had a little hauteur in her expression — which was surely a very ungrateful response to Mr. Herbert's gallantry. If Armyn was amused, as he seemed to be, it was plain that she was not; and sweeping by him without looking at him, she ran to Papa Melville, who had been cordially received by Colonel Delancy, and threw her arms around him and kissed him. They then went and sat down in a corner, and talked in low tones. It was easy to see how happy Fanchette felt at seeing him. At length, Mr. Herbert, watching them in a weak-minded manner, saw her kiss him again and go up-stairs. In doing so, Fanchette passed within three feet of him, but appeared not to see him. It really did seem that this unreasonable young person had resented the exhibition of Mr. Herbert's gallantry; and seeing her expression, Mr. Waring, that profound student of female human nature, wondered.

Just as the sun was setting, a hurrying to and fro of feet in the apartments above indicated that the bridal party were about to appear. The groom and his attendants were waiting; and the parson had just arrived. All at once the bridesmaids made their appearance, followed by the bride, looking as beautiful as brides have always looked from time immemorial.

At the same moment a carriage stopped at the door, and Prince Seminoff got out of it.

CHAPTER XLII.

LOUISE CONGRATULATES LOUISE.

COLONEL DELANCY advanced to meet his guest in a very deliberate manner. His presence, under all the circumstances, was an outrage: therefore the serene old country gentleman, habitually so good-humored, suddenly stiffened into the grand seigneur full of hauteur.

But the Prince presented not the least appearance of having come with hostile intentions. Never was face more smiling or bow more profound. The cheerfulness of his bearing was even greater than his air of deep respect. He extended his hand with winning sweetness, and exclaimed, —

"Pardon the intrusion of an unexpected guest, dear Colonel Delancy! The nuptials of Mademoiselle came to my ears, and I have arrived to congratulate her. I bear also the congratulations of Madame la Mère, who is charmed. She regrets that a terrible *migraine* has prevented her from being present."

The Prince bowed with charming courtesy, exhibiting his white teeth; and Colonel Delancy bowed in response.

"Madame is also engaged in numerous preparations for her voyage," continued the smiling Prince. "It is frightful — the number of trunks that the dear sex require. But then much must be pardoned. We shall probably remain abroad for quite a prolonged period. We shall deeply regret Mademoiselle, and the impossibility of having her charming company."

Colonel Delancy looked at the Prince. What did he mean?

"You propose to travel, then, — and have a travelling companion, Prince?" he said.

"A travelling companion? Without doubt, my dear Colonel Delancy! One travels with his wife — is it not? Are they not one personage?"

The Prince aired his French idioms when he paid compliments or jested — reserving his English construction for serious discussions.

"One's spouse is the dearest of all companions of voyage — is it not?" he added.

"Your spouse?" said Colonel Delancy, in a maze.

"Have you not received the intelligence? The announcement is in the journals of to-day. I have the honor of being the *mari* of Madame Ordmore since yesterday. That angel is no longer *Veuve* Ordmore, but *Madame la Princesse Seminoff!*"

Colonel Delancy looked at the speaker with an air of the profoundest astonishment, and then burst into a laugh.

"Well! — then all our trouble to hasten the

wedding has been thrown away," he exclaimed. "You are no longer the suitor of the daughter, but have married the mother!"

The Prince bowed with his sweetest smile, and Colonel Delancy added, —

"Well, my dear Prince Seminoff, do you know that I wondered why you did not think of that before? Madame is unquestionably handsome — and her *dot* is attractive. You have come to congratulate my niece on the occasion of her marriage — let me congratulate *you!*"

This fraternal interview had consumed but a few minutes. The Prince approached the bride, drawing a morocco case from his pocket.

"I am commissioned to present this small token from Madame your mother, Mademoiselle Louise," he said.

Louise received the case of jewels with an air of indifference, and bowed without speaking.

"I congratulate you, Mademoiselle Louise, and also you, my dear Monsieur Winter!" added the smiling Prince.

Tom Winter looked at him in a very composed manner, and seemed to be studying him as an interesting phenomenon.

"So you've married the old lady," he said in his mild, rather sad voice. "Well, Prince, why didn't you marry her before, and act in a straightforward manner? Why do you foreign people mystify everything? It is a great deal better to be honest, and I advise you to be hereafter."

Having given this good advice to his rival, Tom Winter smiled. He had just seen the parson take his position in front of the fireplace: — all was ready.

Two hours afterwards Bayside was nearly deserted. Papa Melville had remained, and Maya was to spend the night with Fanchette. With these exceptions the wedding guests had all departed. The newly married pair had gone to call on Madame the Princess Seminoff. The Prince had accompanied them, and Armyn and Waring returned to Montrose.

The two friends said very little on their way back to the now deserted mansion. Armyn was apparently reflecting, but his general air was one of relief. The dangerous meeting between himself and Fanchette had had no results. The moon had shone, and the grounds of Bayside were a glory of mellow light, but neither had seemed to desire in the least to avail themselves of the occasion. Fanchette had exhibited no wish whatever to enjoy the outer air, and her companion had carefully avoided any solicitation. The very last thing Armyn wished was to be alone with Fanchette now. He distrusted his own strength of purpose, and like a wise man shunned the danger. From this moment to the time of his departure, he resolved that he would keep the closest watch over himself, and hold to his fixed resolution.

As to Mr. Waring, that gentleman was not

engaged in forming stern resolves — he was puzzling himself vainly over the last words of Fanchette. As he bade her good-night she came close to him and whispered, —

"Something is going to happen to you! You are going to be very miserable, or fall into wild raptures — I don't know which! Come over to-morrow, and all will be revealed. It is terrible — prepare yourself — I tremble for you!"

After saying this, Fanchette laughed in his face, and retired. And now Mr. Waring was in a state of mind which — to invent a new phrase which has never been employed before — can better be imagined than described.

CHAPTER XLIII.

PRINCE AND PRINCESS.

THUS Louise had congratulated Louise! The elder, not the younger, was the "Princess Louise Seminoff" of the Prince's passport. All trouble had ended, and the whole group of personages recently so hostile to each other were good friends now — the late foes were ready to embrace.

The general joy extended to the happy Seminoff. On a sheet of satin note-paper he wrote to his friend in Paris, —

"Rejoice with your friend, *cher* Pulski — he has espoused a gold-mine! The happy event has just been consummated, and the rattle of roubles already resounds — a music sweeter to your friend than the finest of operas!

"The route has been long and painful, but behold me arrived at last. I swear you would have laughed had you been in my cursed situation. Figure to yourself that I was the suitor of a damsel who would not look at me — and suddenly behold me the spouse of her respectable mother! In the very crisis a kind fate removes Madame's lord: she becomes the happy possessor of millions — I

am her devoted! I no longer pine for the sweet Mademoiselle, who possesses nothing. I even do not wish to be burdened with her in dear Paris — so at my instigation the law people issued a writ for her arrest — when behold she marries! Confess, *cher* Pulski, that the device was ingenious! This dear Paris is so tempting, and Mademoiselle might have become fearfully extravagant. She is happily married now — we shall not be troubled with her — and all is best in this best of possible worlds!

"My nuptials have been quiet, but of a splendor befitting the occasion. I was also present at the nuptials of Mademoiselle; and a case of Berlin jewels, not too costly, has cemented the general tenderness. All is thus happily ended, and your friend will soon visit *belle Paris*. That low want of funds, so exasperating to a gentleman, no longer exists — we shall sup — we shall laugh — we shall sacrifice to roulette — we shall celebrate the happy occasion by offering an entertainment to some goddesses of our acquaintance! Then after pleasure — business. I have much to tell you, but not upon paper. *Au revoir bientôt, cher ami!*"

The Prince had indicated briefly, but very intelligibly, what had occurred. Having induced Mrs. Ordmore to promise to become the Princess Seminoff, he had urged legal proceedings to recover Louise — and the result which he looked for had followed. Louise was married, and would not accompany them to Paris. Her marriage would in-

furiate her mother, who would disinherit her; and the Prince would fall heir to his wife's entire property.

It is a very ill wind that blows nobody good. Prince Seminoff had proved himself the best friend of Louise and Tom Winter. It was due to his exertions that the wedding at Bayside had taken place; and a week afterwards he and his Princess were on a steamer bound for Europe

CHAPTER XLIV.

WARING AND MAYA.

WHEN the Montrose coach went to Bayside for Maya, Mr. Waring politely went in it, to escort the young lady on her return.

Fanchette met him on the portico, smiling with a somewhat wicked expression. Long experience had shown Mr. Waring that this smile meant mischief; but he held out his hand and informed her that she looked charming.

"I am very much obliged," said Fanchette, with a demure glance, "but don't you think it would be better to reserve your pretty speeches for — somebody? She is in the drawing-room."

"I will do so — I see it is impossible to flatter you, Fanchette. You are much too intelligent to care for mere compliments. Now relieve my bursting soul! What is going to make me 'happy or miserable, you can't tell which'? Speak, angel of my existence, and end this torture!"

Mr. Waring had resorted to heroics; but Fanchette only laughed.

"I would do so with pleasure, but it would not be polite just now," she said. "A friend of yours

is in the drawing-room, and you should take some notice of her."

"She might wait for a limited period."

"But think of appearances. Something is due to etiquette, sir. It is incumbent upon you to go in at once, and at least make your bow. I will not say 'present your compliments' to Maya, as, poor thing, she wouldn't understand them!"

"You are right," Mr. Waring said, resignedly; "but do you know, Fanchette, I think she is picking up some acquaintance with English words? Now and then she smiles so intelligently when I address her that I am almost sure that she guesses my meaning."

"Do you think so? How very glad I am to hear it! I am sure she will learn. And then think! You would have somebody to chatter to you, which you love so much!"

"I *might* enjoy it — almost everything is agreeable in minute quantities. Even poisons are medicines, you are aware, my dear, in infinitesimal doses."

"You are extremely gallant, sir, and really incorrigible. But I am quite *de trop* — there is somebody who expects you."

With these words Fanchette laughed in Mr. Waring's face, and ran up-stairs.

Mr. Waring found himself alone with Maya in the drawing-room. She was seated at one of the windows, and Waring was extremely puzzled by her expression. She was blushing and smiling.

"Good-morning, Mr. Waring," she said. "I am very glad indeed that the time has come to end this long mystification."

Mr. Waring stood perfectly motionless, looking at Maya with a wild stare. As to making any reply, that idea never for an instant seemed to have entered his mind.

"Fanchette is the cause of everything," Maya continued, with flushed cheeks, but a look which was more mischievous than penitent. "She made me promise on the first evening — when she came to Montrose — that I would pretend to be ignorant of English, and not utter a word in your presence. You affected to have a horror of *chatter*, she said, and it would be delightful to discover if you preferred a *dumb girl!*"

Maya smiled. She raised her languishing eyes, and managed to sustain Mr. Waring's look now; though it certainly was enough to cause her to cast them down.

"Dear Fanchette," murmured Maya; "I am afraid she is very wicked. But then I am no better! She had set her heart on the plot, and persuaded Mr. Armyn to say nothing to undeceive you."

"Wretch!" muttered Mr. Waring with delight.

"So you see I became a dumb girl in order to make a good impression," said Maya. "I saw you in the moonlight that night on the balcony, and — wished you to like me. Was I very wrong? Fanchette told me that you longed to make the

acquaintance of a young lady who could not chatter — and you know I have not chattered in the least since you knew me."

Mr. Waring asked himself, apparently, if he was awake or dreaming. He did not rub his eyes to discover, as he was gazing at Maya; but he was evidently wandering in a maze.

"You know everything now — it was very wrong in me," murmured Maya; "but I promised Fanchette, and you know it would not have been right to break my promise. It was such a delightful mystification! Don't be too hard on us. I am very sorry! I promised Fanchette that I would not speak until she released me from my promise. I have often asked her to do so, but she always refused. It was only this morning that she consented."

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Waring's astonishment exploded suddenly in this tragic exclamation.

"But — but — how did you ever learn English — Maya?"

Maya blushed very much at hearing her name.

"I learned it very simply," she said, casting down her eyes and smiling. "I was educated in a girls' school at Bombay, where a great many Indian girls go to learn the language, and I read and speak English much better than Bengâlî, which I have nearly forgotten. Now I have told you everything, and there is no more mystification. It was very wrong — I am very, very sorry!"

And whether from penitence, or the recollection of certain circumstances which had occurred since her acquaintance with Mr. Waring, Maya blushed more than ever, and looked very much embarrassed. As to the exact origin of the blush which made her brunette cheeks resemble Etruscan gold, it was impossible to understand anything, since the young lady said nothing. Did she recall certain interviews in which Mr. Waring had uttered certain words — made passionate protestations, indeed, though hopeless that they would be understood? Mr. Waring looked confused, and Maya, in spite of her own embarrassment, burst out laughing. Then she stopped as quickly, had recourse again to blushes, and said, humbly, —

"You will forgive me, won't you?"

Poor Waring! The black eyes and blushes quite overcame him. He sighed deeply, and in an absent manner took Maya's hand which hung at her side. She drew it away for the purpose, apparently, of arranging a stray braid of her raven hair, but the movement was not executed in an abrupt or discouraging manner. Mr. Waring gazed at her, and suddenly burst forth, —

"Maya, I have repented! I have changed my views! I wish to marry a girl who can *chatter* — not a cold automaton! You and Fanchette have overcome me — think of all I have been saying to you on numerous occasions! It was wicked to let me go on in that way, and never make the least bit of a reply."

"I am so sorry!" came in a murmur, with eyes cast down.

"But one thing is fortunate," said Mr. Waring. "I needn't make you any more long speeches! I have said nearly everything that a man can say on such interesting occasions. In fact, there's only one more word to say, — my own Maya!"

In an absent and preoccupied manner Mr. Waring took possession of Maya's hand — but suddenly he dropped it. Fanchette tripped down the staircase and came into the drawing-room, smiling sweetly and looking innocent. She beamed on the young couple with the expression of a grandmama; and this expression of celestial sweetness her face retained in spite of Mr. Waring's scowls. Fanchette met them with innocent resignation and surprise; her large eyes seemed to ask what she had done to merit them. When half an hour afterwards Maya retired to get ready to return to Montrose, Fanchette hurried after her, looking triumphantly over her shoulder at Mr. Waring. It was obvious that she wished to avoid "interviewing" that gentleman at the moment, since she retreated hastily as he approached her.

What took place between Fanchette and Maya in their chamber, or between Maya and Mr. Waring afterwards on the ride back to Montrose, remained strictly confidential. Fanchette certainly looked deeply penitent as she kissed her friend on the verandah; and avoided meeting Mr. Waring's eye with a submissive sweetness apparently meant

to disarm him. Mr. Waring was not indignant, however, and no doubt consoled himself with the maxim that what is deferred is not lost. A great deal may be said in a drive of some miles — and it is probable that Mr. Waring said it.

CHAPTER XLV.

WARING MAKES UP HIS MIND TO TAKE A DANGEROUS STEP.

THE yacht had come back, flying on her white wings, to Montrose, and lay in the shaded cove, fully victualled and ready for her outward voyage. Every preparation had been made for the comfort of her passengers: Maya's state-room was a little bird's-nest, with lace curtains and hanging bookshelves. The crew of 'longshoremen were ready; and, Providence permitting, the little bark would cross the wide Atlantic from the Virginia capes to the straits of Gibraltar, traverse the Mediterranean, pass through the Dardanelles, and land her passengers at Batoun on the shore of the Black Sea. There Armyn had directed an escort to meet him, and accompany the party to Kabul. The yacht was to remain at Batoun and await further orders.

This latter arrangement was made with a view to Waring's convenience. There was little doubt that he would be married to Maya, and Armyn wished to afford him the opportunity of returning to the United States with his wife if he determined to do so. Deliberately estimating the chances *pro* and

con, Armyn thought it improbable that he would himself ever return to America. Despatches which had just reached him brought intelligence that a collision between the Emir and the English might take place at any moment. English troops were traversing the Punjaub and concentrating on the Indus. A bitter struggle was certain, in which quarter would not be asked or given by the Afghan forces, and in this struggle Armyn was to take part as commander of one wing of the army. That fact, it was true, afforded him no ground for believing that he would fall. But he was a sailor, and had his presentiments, as sailors will have. He believed that he would not come back, and asked himself sometimes if it was fear of death which made him so reluctant to go. He certainly did not look forward to the struggle with his old ardor and sense of enjoyment — with the throbbing pulse of the man of action who cannot tolerate sloth. Was his energy leaving him? Had the passing years taken away with them his youthful enthusiasm for movement and adventure, surrounding the idea of repose with unwonted attractions? It never occurred to him for a moment that the true explanation of all this apathy was very different — that his depression at the idea of going away from Montrose arose from the fact that in doing so he was leaving forever, perhaps, the woman who was now more than all the world to him. It was a very bitter thought to him that he might never see her again. He reflected with a shrinking heart that the words which they

uttered to each other in parting would probably be the last words ever exchanged between them — that he would not see her smile or hear her voice any more in this world, perhaps — and of all the woeful feelings that assail poor humanity, that is one of the most woeful.

Armyn had not been to Bayside again since the night of the wedding, and was revolving in his mind whether he would do so before sailing. If he went he should see Fanchette, and if he saw her again he might say what he had fully made up his mind he would not say. Under all the circumstances it would be a great deal better not to see her again; she would be hurt, of course, and the family would regard it as a great discourtesy that he went away without telling them good-by; but it would be best.

He was thinking of this on the day before that appointed for the sailing of the yacht, when the carriage from Bayside rolled up the hill, escorted by Papa Melville and Tom Winter on horseback. The carriage contained Colonel and Mrs. Delancy, Louise and Fanchette. They had come to bid the voyagers good-by.

It was a cheerful day, considering the fact that these good people were sincerely distressed at parting with each other. Louise had hastened back from her visit to the capital to see the last of Maya, and described the interview with her mother. Mrs. Ordmore had quite relented, and made a jest of everything. She was glad Louise was happily mar-

ried — and she was going to Paris. And then the Prince had entered, smiled from the lips outward, offered his congratulations anew, and the interview which had been so much dreaded came to an end in the most commonplace manner. After a brief visit to Bayside they were going back to town. Mr. Winter had secured a lucrative clerkship in the Treasury Department — and at the prospect of the little *ménage* which they had arranged, Louise looked quite cheerful and content.

In the afternoon the company broke up into groups. Fanchette and Mr. Waring walked out to exchange a few last confidences, and might be seen by the persons on the terrace strolling slowly beneath the great oaks in conversation.

Mr. Waring either was or affected to be cheerful, and to have retained at least a part of his good spirits. Perhaps the prospect of having Maya's company on the voyage robbed the parting of its depressing character, or it may have been that Mr. Waring, seeing Fanchette's doleful face, was seized with pity and considered it his duty to cheer the weaker vessel.

"Come, try and do a little in the way of laughing, Fanchette!" he said. "You look as if you had lost your last friend. Come, cheer up!"

"How can I cheer up?" she said in a mournful voice. "I never felt so distressed. I *wish* you were not going — you and Maya — and Mr. Armyn."

Mr. Waring looked at her as she uttered these

words, and it was perfectly plain that it was a look of curiosity.

"Well, I think Armyn is very little in the notion of — leaving *you*," he said. "He has not told me so, but he is a warm-hearted fellow, and devoted to his friends. You know you are one of them."

Fanchette made no reply.

"Let me go and tell him that you wish to see him. You have scarcely said a word to each other since you came this morning."

He was going, but Fanchette stopped him by laying her hand on his arm. There was a little color in her cheeks, and her eyes were fixed upon the ground.

"No — not now. Of course I shall see him before he goes. I am going to spend the night with Maya, and Louise will stay too. They will send for us in the morning — after the yacht has sailed."

Fanchette turned her head away, and began to sob quietly.

"Dear Fanchette! You are crying," said Mr. Waring, losing all his cheerfulness. "Don't! — a man can't stand that."

"Well, don't mind me — you know I was born in April. I shall be laughing in a minute, I suppose. After all, you will come back soon, — you must make it very soon, — and bring Maya with you."

Mr. Waring looked a little confused and said, —

"I have forgiven you that awful depravity! I

can't be angry with you at this moment, Fanchette, when we are going to say good-by. I never knew how much I loved you."

"You will get along very well with the assistance of Maya," said Fanchette.

"You are jealous! The green-eyed monster is preying upon your feelings!" exclaimed Mr. Waring.

"Of course I am jealous," said Fanchette, trying to smile. "You are not going to like me any more now — or love me, at least. You keep all that for Maya — I suppose it is arranged — I am sorry I came into the parlor."

"That act ought to fill you with penitence, Fanchette. It was an interesting moment. Our mutual friend had just revealed the dreadful trick you played upon me. Heaven will surely punish you for all your depravity and ingratitude. I have brought you up with care, and, like the best of grandpas, I have petted and encouraged you on all occasions. And then like a monster you turn on me and make fun of me in that heartless manner!"

"It was very wrong," murmured Fanchette with a sad smile.

"That is what a friend of yours said — she employed the same expression. It is intended to disarm — to melt by its sad sweetness. You all use it under the same circumstances, to get yourselves out of trouble. You look down with a sweet seriousness, and coo, and think that is the

end of it. I know your tricks and your manners; but then I suppose I ought to make allowances. You are nothing but girls — only weaker vessels. You are a curious class of beings, and can't help it, poor things!"

It was obvious that this worthy newspaper man was resolutely bent on cheering Fanchette and putting her in good spirits. He was sincerely pained at the idea of parting with her, and felt exceedingly doleful at the moment. But, like a real friend, he suppressed his melancholy, and assumed a tone of cheerfulness.

"Don't misunderstand me," he said, with a controversial air; "when I say the *weaker vessels*, I mean the weaker *and better*. You have a great deal more in you than the boys and other unintellectual people who laugh at you. Only it don't come out all at once. You are froth and moonshine, but as soon as you come to love anybody and contemplate matrimony, you are angels."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said Fanchette with the same sad smile; "but if you mean me, I shall never marry anybody."

"That is what you all say. Your sense of security in such matters always impresses me as your most delightful trait. You stand on the brink of the precipice, and figuratively execute a pirouette. You'll tumble in some day, and then you'll wonder you ever laughed."

Fanchette shook her head.

"I shall not tumble into matrimony with anybody," she said.

"Some good fellow will tell you that you are all the world to him — the dearest of objects, and all that, you know. Don't you think that would touch a responsive chord?"

"I don't think it would."

"You are mistaken! You are an angel, and angels are tender-hearted. Think! Suppose I had fallen in love with you: do you mean that you could have resisted that? The mistake of my life was not doing so, and courting you. I regret it deeply."

"I am very glad you did not," said Fanchette with a little of her old cheerfulness. She then looked up at him with smiles shining through the tears in her eyes, and said, —

"You dear old fellow! You are a thousand times too good for me, but I shall never marry anybody. I should not make any one happy."

"Why not?"

"I am too volatile. I believe I have a warm heart, for I love a great many people very dearly; but — no one will ever love me in the way you mean. There is nothing in me to make them."

Fanchette's voice faltered and she stopped. As she was looking at the ground, she did not see the expression upon her companion's face. It was a very curious and puzzled expression, and something was evidently passing through Mr. Waring's mind.

"Well, the subject of discussion is too profound to be fathomed on the present occasion," he said.

"In reference to yourself, Fanchette, I confine myself to the remark that I regard you as an angel. And as nothing is more objectionable than to monopolize the society of angels, suppose we rejoin those common mortals on the terrace."

CHAPTER XLVI.

ON THE HEADLAND.

FANCHETTE went back with Mr. Waring to the terrace feeling a little surprised at his somewhat abrupt termination of their interview. Was he going to inflict himself upon Maya, whom he would see every hour, overlooking the fact that he would not see *her* any more perhaps for years? It was very sad, and Fanchette's head drooped. She might have expected it: men always acted in that way when they were in love; their dearest friends became a weariness to them in comparison with the one object. And thus reflecting, poor Fanchette felt very dreary indeed, and had a vague sense that everything around her was melancholy and depressing.

As they came up to the terrace, Armyn, who was looking in the direction of the bay, where the sails of the yacht could be seen through the trees, turned round and saw that Fanchette was looking at him. Her eyes swam in tears, and had in their depths an expression of unutterable sadness. His face filled with blood in spite of every effort which he made to control himself; and as she went into the house

he followed her with his eyes, scarcely aware of the presence of Waring.

Mr. Waring touched his shoulder. He had just taken a cigar from his pocket, and now proceeded to throw it away.

"Give me one of your Small Plantations — I can't smoke this trash!" he said; and taking his friend by the arm, he drew him in the direction of the library where the Small Plantations were kept.

They remained shut up there for about half an hour, and then came out and rejoined the company. It was easy to see from Armyn's countenance that Mr. Waring had said something to him which disquieted him. What was this something? Mr. Waring's concluding observations as he came out of the library were ambiguous.

"I have performed my duty — a heavy load is removed from my bosom," said Mr. Waring. "I have spoken in the simplicity of my nature, and from an inner movement. I am not an authorized ambassador from any other power — very far from it. I have acted solely from that tremendous and crushing sentiment, a sense of duty, which even a newspaper man is occasionally a victim to."

And smiling with an air of relief, Mr. Waring went up to Maya in the drawing-room, and asked her to play for him.

The sun was hovering like a ball of fire on the surface of the bay, with a long red path running toward him over the crests of the waves. The air

was mild and balmy; the delicate fringes of foliage were clearly outlined against the orange background, and the murmur of the surf came up in a lulling monotone from the little cove where the yacht was lying ready to spread her wings and disappear.

Armyn had walked down with his visitors to show them the vessel, and pointed with the pride of a sailor to the neat dress his "little beauty," as he called her, had put on for her voyage. The yacht had received a new coat of paint, and was furbished from head to foot. The deck was like the floor of a drawing-room, it was so neat, and the brasses shone like mirrors. Maya's state-room had white curtains and a fringed pillow in her berth, and on a little hanging-shelf were her favorite books out of the Montrose library. The saloon was richly carpeted, and the table-service arranged in its swinging receptacles. In this little moving home they were going to cross the broad waters, and if some storm did not wreck them, Maya and her companions would step forth from it on the soil of Asia.

Fanchette went all over the yacht, examining everything with an affectation of interest; but her expression was weary, and she seemed to suppress her tears with great difficulty. This was natural, as she was very tenderly attached to Maya; and indeed, she and that young lady retired temporarily to the small state-room, and indulged in a confidential cry. This was interrupted by the sound of

steps on the gang-plank, and looking through the small window, they saw that the company was going ashore; whereupon Fanchette and Maya, having laughed and cried for a moment or two longer, came out of the state-room and followed them.

The sun was down by this time, and the sweetest hour of the day had come. Over the surface of the bay a violet vapor slowly diffused itself. Long processions of wild ducks passed steadily across the background of delicate orange, and the distant headlands were already swimming in the mists of night. Armyn's visitors were scattered along the slope, enjoying the beautiful evening, and he had gone with Fanchette to a point on the bluff where the trees opened, affording an excellent view of the bay.

Fanchette could never tell afterwards in what precise manner this interview with Armyn had been brought about. She certainly had not proposed it, and she did not remember that he had done so. Perhaps they had drifted together, and away from the rest — such incidents occur. At any rate, there they were, standing alone together on the headland, with the long wash of the surf beneath them, and the water horizon growing dim as they looked at it. As the path up to the bluff was steep, Armyn had offered her his arm, and when they reached the top Fanchette had either forgotten the fact that she was still holding it, or purposely left her hand lying upon it. It was a very beautiful

hand, attached to a slender white wrist, encircled by the bracelet containing Armyn's picture, and it might have been that Fanchette wanted him to see that she was wearing it. This, however, is pure conjecture — it is a difficult matter to read the thoughts of people when they remain as silent as Fanchette did. She had not said a word since they began the ascent of the bluff, but she clung to him, with her curls nearly brushing his shoulder, and looked up into his eyes with a face covered with blushes.

Does anybody blame her? She loved him very sincerely, and was very sorry that he was going away. It is not good to be cold to people whom we are attached to and who are going to leave us — perhaps we shall not see them any more, and then we are certain to regret it. So Fanchette drew close to Armyn, and looked up into his eyes with an expression which said, "Why need I conceal from you how fond I am of you, and how painful it is to think that you are going to leave me!" She might *look* that, since she had *said* to him on the verandah at Bayside, "I love you very much — how am I ever to do without you!" Was it not perfectly natural, then, that now, when they were standing together on the lonely headland, about to part, she should lean back her forehead and look at him with that long glance, blushing faintly and smiling?

Poor dear Fanchette! It has been very difficult to draw her portrait. She was the kindest and

best girl in the world; but still she was a girl! She loved to be loved, and was not averse to being admired. She had not listened with indifference that morning when Armyn told her that she was beautiful, and when she had replied, "I am not, but I am glad that you think I am." Fanchette could no more have prevented her voice from sinking to a murmur, and her cheeks from coloring a little on such occasions, than she could have refrained from laughing if some one had gotten down on his knees to her and repeated a love-poem.

She did not feel at all disposed to laugh, it seemed, at the present moment. Instead of doing so, she sighed piteously, her head drooped, and her corsage rose and fell in a doleful manner.

Armyn took the hand resting upon his arm, and said, quietly, —

"Fanchette."

She raised her head and looked him in the face with an expression of unutterable sadness.

"Come and go to the East with me, Fanchette!"

He spoke calmly, but all the passion of his strong nature betrayed itself in the sudden flash of his eye.

"I am quite alone in the world. I love you, and only you. If you are not my wife, I shall never have any other. Come, Fanchette!"

She burst into tears, and exclaimed, —

"I cannot!"

Armyn stood for a moment looking not at Fanchette, but out on the waste of waters before him upon which the night was descending.

"That is my answer, then," he said, in his deep voice. "Shall I tell you that I expected it? You will not come, then?"

Fanchette's eyes were streaming with tears. Instead of drawing away the hand which Armyn was still holding, she took his in both of her own, and said, in a faltering voice, —

"I cannot! — I do not love you!"

And as poor Fanchette uttered these words, she looked as if she had lost the last friend she had in the world.

"I am very — very sorry! It was so unfortunate that we came here!"

"No, it is not unfortunate," said Armyn gently.

"If we had not come you would not have told me this!" exclaimed Fanchette, still clasping his hand in both of her own. "It has distressed me so much! Not to be told that you love me — oh, no! I am very thankful for that. But I should not have had to say what you must think very cruel in me. What else *could* I say? I ought to be honest — I ought not to deceive you. I love you very much, but I do not love you in the way you wish — or as you deserve to be loved."

Armyn bowed his head, and said gently and kindly, —

"Very well, Fanchette; don't grieve about that. It is not your fault. How can a woman control her heart? It would be very unreasonable to expect that. And it was a great deal better to make me the reply you have made than one of a different

sort. It might prove unfortunate to you if you married me. I am going on an expedition which I may not come back from. The black dress of a widow would not be becoming to a rosebud like you. So don't cry, Fanchette. Instead of being unfortunate, perhaps our stroll has been fortunate. I wanted you to know how much I loved you, before we parted. It must have begun as soon as I knew you. I don't know — it ends here: not my love, but — Good-by! I can't say that I am very happy, but at least you will be."

"Oh, no! I am far from happy! Anything but that!" she exclaimed.

"You will be. You will forget all this — you have a great many persons to love you."

He raised her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

"There is so much company yonder I shall scarcely see you again. This is good-by," he said.

Fanchette's heart was aching, and she uttered a sigh so hopeless that Armyn remembered it years afterwards.

"Don't go!" she said.

"I must."

"You won't leave me!"

"It is better — for both of us," he said, almost at the end of his strength.

Fanchette's head sank upon his shoulder, as if she had grown suddenly faint. He bent down and touched the straw-colored hair with his lips, when she raised her wet face and held up her lips to him.

"No — I love you too much," he said, drawing back. "Good-by, Fanchette!"

On the next morning the yacht opened her white wings and began her flight toward the East; or, in less ambitious phrase, weighed anchor, and taking advantage of a fresh breeze, headed straight for the Virginia capes.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A YOUNG SCHOOL-MISTRESS.

ABOUT a year after these events, the long shadows of evening were beginning to creep over the lawn at Bayside, and Fanchette, who had been detained at school by a meeting of the Board of Supervisors, came back along a path winding through the fields toward home.

As she entered the grounds around the house, carrying a satchel of straw-work containing her text-books, she was very unlike the Fanchette of the year before. She had not lost any of her beauty, and her face still had that tint, a clear white just touched with rose, which had made her look so fresh; but then her manner was much less buoyant than before, and she wore black. It was a sort of incongruity to see the dazzling Fanchette whom Mr. Waring had compared to a sunbeam and Armyn to a rosebud, clothed in that sombre manner; but Fanchette's youth and beauty defied all attempts to hide them.

Her figure was exquisite in its gloomy covering — it was even more attractive than it had been before. The year which had just passed over her

head had rounded every outline: it was the figure of a woman now instead of a girl's; and her eyes and lips had a new fascination, since the rose is after all more attractive than the rosebud.

Poor Fanchette had suffered very much in this short space of twelve months. The mourning which she wore was for Papa Melville. She had resolutely refused to part with him and live at Bayside, and all that she would consent to was that she would remain there during the summer. With the coming of autumn she declared her fixed intention to go and live with him in some quiet home somewhere, or if that was beyond their means, to return to the stage, and thereby provide for his comfort. As he had loved and cherished her, she said, she would love and cherish him as long as he lived.

This was Fanchette's final word on the subject — she could never leave Papa Melville. But the moment came before the end of summer when Papa Melville left her. He came to see her frequently, and when he could not come he wrote. Then the letters stopped, and one day a telegram came from New York — Papa Melville was dying. He had been taken ill suddenly during one of his performances, — for he had quietly returned to the stage, — and Fanchette and Colonel Delancy hurried northward, and arrived just in time to see him before he died. Stretched on his bed in a quiet boarding-house, he seemed to have been waiting to see Fanchette before he would consent to die. She came to him,

and put her arms around him, sobbing and covering his face with kisses; and poor Papa Melville drew her close to him, raising his eyes as he did so. As his lips moved he was probably speaking to some one, and Fanchette's name which escaped from his lips in a murmur seemed to indicate of whom he was thus speaking. With her name his breath went. It was the last sound he uttered. Doubtless the soul of the veteran actor thus passing from the stage of life, where he had acted a good part, carried that thought — the thought of the child he had loved so dearly — to the mysterious world. As men remember dreams and are thrilled by them on awaking, he doubtless remembered Fanchette then, and still loved her.

This was Fanchette's first great distress. She came back home — it was home now — with a lost feeling which she had never felt before. A chord in her life seemed to have snapped suddenly, and an acute pang followed. It was a long time before she recovered even a part of her former good spirits. But youth is strong — the spring is still elastic at Fanchette's age. She was only eighteen, and at eighteen sorrow touches us lightly; it is only afterwards that it weighs down the shoulders and penetrates like a snow-drift into the heart, and stays there. In youth the snow-drift melts. The sun of May is so brilliant! And Fanchette was in her May, and slowly recovered her cheerfulness.

She had refused to be dependent even on those who loved her so much, the family at Bayside.

She had her own views on this subject, and adhered to them in spite of every effort made by Colonel and Mrs. Delancy to change them. A girl should do something. It was not right to remain idle. She would not be satisfied — she would not go back to the stage, but she must earn her own support, and be of some use to somebody.

Mrs. Delancy protested — she was far from being of no use to anybody at Bayside. Louise had gone now, and they would be very dreary in the big house without their dear Fanchette. Her very presence brought sunshine; and if that was too poetical a view of the subject, Mrs. Delancy would call the attention of Fanchette to the fact that she was sole housekeeper. Since she came there was no more trouble. She, Mrs. Delancy, had really begun to play the fine lady and enjoy herself. Even Louise had never been such a help to her.

But Fanchette was not persuaded. She would still keep house, but try to do more, she said. And the result was that in the autumn she took charge of a public school for children in the vicinity. The supervisors unanimously elected her, and she began at once. There was no trouble in going to and from the school-house. It was scarcely a mile distant, and nearly in sight. Then the path through the fields made it unnecessary to go by the highroad. So Fanchette walked to her school and back in all weather without complaining — even in winter her stout shoes sufficiently protected her feet. She had become very much interested in her

school by this time. Many of the children were very bright, and the growing intelligence in the small faces quite delighted her. As Waring had often said, Fanchette was a very good girl. She remembered many things that this worthy personage had said to her, if not this, and more than one expression, too, of another person. When she thought of him she always lived over again the scene when they had parted with each other.

For a time Mr. Waring's special letters had kept the Bayside family *au courant* of affairs in the East. The country was preparing for a great struggle: war was imminent between the Emir and the English, who were advancing through the Punjaub. The Afghan forces were assembling and undergoing a thorough reorganization by the Rajah of Kabul — and then private letters came from Mr. Waring with more personal intelligence. He and Maya were married. She was an angel, only she talked too much. She sent her love to Fanchette and all the dear ones at Bayside. And her grandfather Anonda had embraced the Christian faith, which she herself had embraced a long time before.

Of Armyn Mr. Waring gave in these private letters a full account. He was the head of the military establishment of the kingdom — a species of War Secretary. As rajah he personally commanded one wing of the army. His health was perfectly good, but he was not so gay as before. This arose, perhaps, from doubt of the issue of the

contest. Since his return, he informed Waring, his heart was not nearly so much interested in the struggle. The Emir had developed a spirit of double-dealing, almost of treachery, which was revolting. He was engaged in secret negotiations both with Russia and England, which was dangerous. He had recently attempted the assassination of his own father, Shere Ali. And then the resentment of the Indian viceroy, Lord Lytton, at his double-dealing, was defensible. The advance of the English troops was no longer an invasion of a free State without provocation. The foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield was, after all, the true policy, from the English point of view — no Russian frontier for India, the preservation of the balance of power, no submission to every outrage offered to English dignity. Briefly, Mr. Waring reported that Armyn was going to fight, but not with anything like enthusiasm now — and sent his love to everybody; and there these letters to Bayside always ended.

After a while they did not come. The last announced that a battle was imminent. The English had passed the Indus, and were advancing on Kabul. Then a hiatus was presented in Mr. Waring's correspondence, public and private. Fanchette waited with anxiety, and opened the mail-bag every day with glowing cheeks — there were no letters from either Mr. Waring or Maya, who had frequently written to her. Had any disaster happened? The papers did not report that there

had been any fighting. Mr. Waring's silence no doubt arose from the interruption of communications.

Fanchette therefore endeavored to persuade herself that all was well, and that there was no cause for anxiety. She was a little afraid that some one would see how anxious she was. She seldom spoke of Armyn, and then with great sadness; but there was no reason to believe that she regretted anything which had passed between them. If she ever did so, it is possible that she quieted her conscience by telling herself that she could not have acted in a different manner. And that is always a very great consolation — though perhaps not a very cheerful one.

She had an opportunity soon after the sailing of the yacht to efface the memory of these past emotions, or at least to enter upon a new life in the midst of new scenes, which generally does in some degree efface the past. Mr. Charley Herbert had probably met with misfortune on that evening at Montrose. But this youth had a profound conviction that women rarely mean what they say; that he was a very handsome fellow, who would one day be the heir to a fine estate; and that nothing was more improbable than that a young lady in Fanchette's position would remain obdurate. She was certain to think better of it in the long run, and make up her mind to it. And about one month after the sailing of the yacht Mr. Herbert re-appeared at Bayside. He came one afternoon, and

went away on the next morning. And Mrs. Delancy, considering the matter, and smiling to herself confidentially, came to the conclusion that this abrupt departure had resulted from a private interview, after tea, on the verandah.

Such an interview had certainly taken place between Fanchette and Mr. Herbert; and by a curious coincidence, just at the spot where she had talked with Armyn on the morning of his visit. Did Fanchette remember the fact? It is possible — such things often come back to the memory. The person you saw in that seat yonder has gone away, and is not coming back any more. He has forgotten you, or is dead, if the senseless seat *is* still there. He or she — the pronoun may be adapted to the sex of the person — said certain things in a certain tone of voice, with certain looks accompanying the words. It was here, in this very spot where the Venetian leans back against the wall, and you see the fringe of the lace curtain. You can't forget what was said here once upon a time by a person who is no longer here, however flattering the words and glances of the new face beside you may be.

Whether Fanchette was thinking of all this or not, it became tolerably obvious to Mrs. Delancy on the next morning that Mr. Herbert had attacked and sustained a complete defeat. He went away with ill-concealed anger, which was certainly very unreasonable; and three months afterwards took

his revenge by sending Fanchette an invitation to his wedding with one of his cousins. Fanchette wrote back congratulating him cordially, but said that her duties as school-mistress would prevent her, to her regret, from being present. And so the gallant Charley Herbert, who had a very handsome mustache by this time, faded out of Fanchette's existence, and disappears from the pages of this history.

If anything was obvious, it was that Fanchette had determined to be an old maid. A portentous proof of this was that when the young gentlemen of the neighborhood came and deployed all their fascinations, she did not so much as smile at them except in a strictly conventional manner, and did not once cast down her eyes or coo. Now when a girl of our small heroine's character neglects the observance of these ceremonies, the case of the young Lochinvars is quite a hopeless one.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE LATEST INTELLIGENCE.

AS Fanchette came across the lawn on this evening of early summer, Colonel Delancy, who was seated on the verandah reading his newspapers just brought from the mail, called out, —

"Here is news of our friend the Prince, my dear. He has gotten himself into trouble."

"Prince Seminoff, uncle?" said Fanchette, coming and leaning on his shoulder. She called him uncle now, and Mrs. Delancy aunt — it was by their own request.

"Yes, my dear. I was perfectly certain that he meant to return to Russia and engage in the Nihilist plots. He was one of the leaders, it seems, in the recent attempt to blow up the Emperor in the Winter Palace. And, very singularly, here in the same paper which contains the statements in reference to him, is a description of the grand entertainments given by Madame Seminoff in Paris."

"In Paris! Is she there, uncle?"

"Yes, indeed!" chirped the old Colonel. "I foresaw that her travels would terminate in that beautiful city. She married the Prince for that.

She had plenty of money, but no title. Having secured the title, she went to air it in Europe: — but I will read you the paragraphs."

Mrs. Delancy came out as they were speaking, and she and Fanchette exchanged a kiss. It was easy to see, from the expression of this beautiful woman's face, that she was quite wrapped up in the girl. There was an exquisite tenderness in her face as she looked at Fanchette. This look is occasionally caught on the faces of certain people, and is a very peculiar one. It is the home-look, and expresses something quite different from the society-look.

"Uncle has news of Prince Seminoff and Mrs. Seminoff, aunty," said Fanchette, going back and leaning on the Colonel's shoulder. "He was just about to read it to me."

"In the papers? Is there any trouble, my dear?"

"I see you have had the same idea as myself — that our friend would get himself into difficulties," said the Colonel. "Yes, he is in very serious trouble from his connection with the Nihilists. I never had any doubt that our friend the Prince was a member of the society, and here is the proof that he was one of the leaders."

The Colonel adjusted his spectacles, and smoothed down his gray side-whiskers.

"As I am a methodical sort of body, I will read the paragraphs consecutively," he said, "and then one relating to Madame the Princess, who is in Paris, it seems."

The Colonel then read the following: —

THE RECENT EXPLOSION.

ST. PETERSBURG, 27th. — It is impossible to rectify all the erroneous statements of the foreign press relative to the explosion in the Winter Palace. The dynamite was in all probability brought to the palace in small quantities by a pretended carpenter, who had been working in the palace since September last, and who is now supposed to have been a mechanical engineer. After having sent away his fellow-workmen this individual made his final preparations, ignited a slow match and quitted the palace.

PARIS, 27th. — A despatch to the Manchester *Guardian* says that official documents have been submitted to the French Government by Prince Orloff, the Russian ambassador here, by which it was intended to prove the criminalty of Hartman in connection with the Moscow explosion; but they are considered too vague to establish the guilt of the accused.

LATER.

PARIS, 28th. — It is now reported that Prince Seminoff, one of the most noted leaders of the Nihilists, and supposed to be connected with the attempt on the life of the Emperor, has escaped from Russia and is in Paris. The *Journal de Ste. Petersbourg* is the authority for this report, and it is said that a demand has been also made for his extradition by the Imperial Government. The presence of the Princess Seminoff in Paris gives color to the rumor that if he succeeded in leaving Russia, the Prince has sought refuge here, and Prince Orloff will no doubt demand his arrest.

ST. PETERSBURG, 29th. — Prince Seminoff, the Nihilist leader, who was supposed to have escaped to Paris, was arrested four days ago at the house of the female Nihilist Vera Sassulitch, who on the 5th of February,

1868, attempted to assassinate General Trepoff, Prefect of Police, in his cabinet. The arrest of the Prince has aroused profound excitement, and General Melikoff is said to have been notified by the Executive Committee of the Nihilist organization that the execution of Prince Seminoff will be a test question whether the assassination of the General, which has not yet been decided upon, shall be directed by the Committee.

"What a society!" said the Colonel. "Assassination seems the order of the day! But here is a last telegram — they make quick work of it in that barbarous country."

"Poor Prince Seminoff! — have they tried him?" said Mrs. Delancy.

"Here is the telegram:"

Prince Seminoff, who was arrested for participation in the attempt to destroy the Emperor at the Winter Palace, has been tried by a military commission, and sentenced to perpetual exile in Siberia. The sentence was carried out at 2 P.M. to-day. His sword was broken above his head, to indicate that he was degraded from his rank as a nobleman, and he set out on foot in a dress of coarse sheepskin, accompanied by a strong escort. The Nevskoi Prospekt was thronged, and many well-known Nihilists were seen in the crowd, but there was no disturbance.

"Poor Prince Seminoff!" repeated Mrs. Delancy. "What a terrible fate to be exiled to Siberia!"

"Well," the Colonel said philosophically, "it must have been rather disagreeable to the Czar if he had been blown up. I think the poor Prince is rather lucky."

"What an escape for Louise!"

"A fortunate escape indeed. After all, she was very right in preferring her dear Thomas to the Prince! They are as happy as larks, and I suppose she has quite forgotten me," added the Colonel with a pathetic sigh.

"I am sure she has not, uncle!" said Fanchette with an affectionate glance. "You are much too good for anybody to forget you!"

And having made this affectionate speech, Fanchette put her arm around the Colonel's neck, and with the other hand smoothed his thin gray hair.

"Well, Tom is a very fine fellow, and I am growing resigned," he said. "It is natural that you young good-for-nothings should prefer 'curly gold locks' to bald heads. We have no Louise now, and the next thing we'll have no Fanchette."

"Do you think so?" said Fanchette, laughing in something like her old way. "If you do you are very much mistaken."

The Colonel shook his head.

"You'll flit off one of these days. You can't resist the brilliant youths who are flying around you — one of them is certain to capture you."

Fanchette laughed again, and said, —

"A girl is supposed to have something to say on such occasions, uncle."

"You are going to be hard-hearted, then?"

"Very hard-hearted."

"You will send them all away as you sent the handsome Charley Herbert! Don't say you didn't

— it would be an awful fib, my dear child. How could you resist that diamond ring which I am certain he came to present you with, and his new turnout with the bright bays? But I see I am teasing you — there! I've done now. Let us come back to the news. I have not yet read you the paragraph about Madame Seminoff."

The Colonel folded his favorite journal, and readjusted his spectacles.

"The introductory remarks of the writer are a slight shock to so modest an old gentleman as myself," he said. "But *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, is a motto of great convenience in perusing what is found in the journals of the present epoch."

He then read aloud:

OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENCE.

In the more sedate régime of the present the extravagances of the Second Empire are recalled with peculiar contrast. For example, that famous fancy costume of the Marquis de B——, who on one occasion went as a ragpicker in a suit of white satin, his basket being of silver wire filled with natural flowers, his hook of silver, and his lantern of plate glass engraved with his armorial bearings. But the most memorable dresses worn during that era of fancy balls were probably the Indian costume assumed by a certain celebrity of the imperial court, and that of Salammbo, the heroine of Flaubert's Carthaginian novel, worn by the beautiful Countess Castiglione. Then there is a legend of a certain "Diana" costume which another noted belle had prepared for her own wearing, and which consisted mainly of a silver quiver and a number of diamond crescents.

"What in the world has that to do with Madame

Seminoff, Colonel Delancy?" cried Mrs. Delancy, much shocked.

"It is the introductory paragraph — perhaps I should have omitted it," said Colonel Delancy meekly. "I will proceed to the main portion. It is as follows:" —

This license of the Second Empire has recently been revived — it might almost be said to be exceeded — by the Princess Seminoff in her famous receptions. Madame de Seminoff is an American lady of great wealth in her own right, independent of the Prince, who is one of the largest land-holders in Russia. He is said to be a member of the notorious Executive Committee of the Nihilists, and is supposed to be now in Russia on business connected with the order. This is, however, a mere rumor; and Madame Seminoff, who is one of the queens of society here, has been heard to deny the fact with great indignation, and to assert that the Prince is absent upon business relating to his large possessions, which have suffered from his recent tour in the United States. The Princess evidently indulges no apprehensions in regard to the Prince, and her brilliant entertainments are the talk of Paris. She has succeeded in assembling at these the first literary and artistic celebrities, and her salon on such occasions recalls the glories of the Second Empire, more especially in the costumes worn by the ladies. These costumes which Madame Seminoff has brought into fashion are very beautiful, but *décolletée* to the very last degree, and nearly indescribable. I shall, nevertheless, attempt a brief sketch of one worn by the Princess at her last reception. The train was of violet velvet, embroidered with Marshal Neil roses, and the corsage, if there was any —

"That will do, Colonel Delancy!" exclaimed Mrs. Delancy, quietly taking the paper. "I sup-

pose the person who wrote this account was not invited to Mrs. Ordmore's — the Princess' — entertainments, and is taking his revenge by speaking ill of her."

The Colonel scratched his whiskers gently, and said, smiling, —

"I really don't know — it is possible. You know best, my dear. After all, I am very glad that she is the Princess Seminoff, and that Louise is not."

Mrs. Delancy, with a slight movement of the head, quietly dismissed the subject, and said, —

"You were very late to-day, dear Fanchette — you have actually had no dinner."

"I am not at all hungry, aunty. I can easily wait till tea."

Mrs. Delancy looked at her affectionately and said, —

"Your appetite is not very good. You are not as cheerful as you used to be — you are losing some of your roses, my child."

"I have plenty," said Fanchette, smiling and taking the paper, which she glanced at absently.

Suddenly she fixed her eyes with an intense gaze upon a paragraph in the journal, and uttered a low moan. Mrs. Delancy turned her head quickly, and saw that she was as white as a sheet. At the same moment she tottered, and Mrs. Delancy had just time to put her arms around her and prevent her from falling.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed, addressing Colonel Delancy.

He stooped and picked up the paper which had fallen from Fanchette's hand. The paragraph which she had read was in one corner of the journal, and had escaped his attention. It was as follows: —

LATEST BY CABLE FROM CALCUTTA. — Intelligence has just arrived *via* Candahar that a decisive action took place yesterday between the British and Afghan forces in the Indra pass on the route to Kabul. The battle lasted throughout the day, but the enemy were at last repulsed and pursued in the direction of Kabul. The loss of the Afghans was heavy, and some of their foremost leaders were killed. Among these is General Armyn, Rajah of Kabul and leader of the left wing of the forces. He fell at the end of the battle whilst attempting to rally the fugitives. He is said to have been an American, and formerly a Colonel in the Confederate army.

"He is dead, then! He was a brave man!" said Colonel Delancy in a low voice. He held up the paper, pointing out to Mrs. Delancy the words,

Killed, — General Armyn.

All the color faded from her face; and drawing Fanchette, who was sobbing as if her heart would break, to her bosom, she murmured in her ear, —

"I know all now, my child, and my heart bleeds for you!"

CHAPTER XLIX.

A MODEL HUSBAND.

AUTUMN had begun to touch the leaves of the trees in the grounds at Bayside with its burning finger, and with every passing hour the woods assumed fresher and more beautiful colors. The air was delightfully soft, and a dreamy repose seemed to have descended on the tranquil landscape. Through an opening in the belt of forest shutting in the domain on the west might be seen in the distance the dim expanse of the bay — a lonely waste at times, but a moment afterwards, perhaps, traversed by some flitting sail. Scarcely a sound disturbed the silence. The caw of an idle crow winging his slow way against the blue sky was nearly all. Bayside resembled a domain in the land of silence.

Poor Fanchette came out of the house one morning, and sat down on the verandah where she had talked that morning with Armyn. She was very thin and pale. It was not at all the old Fanchette with her ribbons and roses, her lips as red as carnations, and the smile which Mr. Waring had compared to the bubble on champagne. She was a poor, sad girl with white cheeks, and a woe-begone

look, who was thinking at that moment, with a dull pang at her heart, that she would never see again the person who had sat here once at her side. She was constantly haunted by the recollection of this interview, by the one under the oak at Montrose, and that last one on the headland above the bay before he left her. Not a word or a look had faded out of her memory, and she broke her heart thinking of certain words he had uttered — "You are very beautiful. I love you, and only you. Come and go to the East with me, Fanchette;" — and that last reply of her own, "I cannot, — I do not love you!"

What a fearful error she had committed in uttering those words! How she had deceived herself! It was only when he had gone away from her that she had found out the truth. She loved him, though she had told him that she did not. She had been honest in saying that — no woman had ever been more so — and had acted as she thought it her duty to act. But all the woeful mistake was soon plain to her. She had refused the heart this man offered her, and he had gone away loving her — not knowing that she loved him too with all her heart. He had gone, and now he would never come back! Fanchette leaned her face in both hands, and bent down like a poor flower bowed by a strong wind, and cried quietly.

She was still in this forlorn attitude, her figure shaken with sobs, when an arm was placed around her, and raising her head, she saw Mrs. Delancy.

"My poor child, don't cry so. I know very well what you are thinking of," said the kind lady. "Your distress is natural, and such a misfortune is very hard to recover from. But you must not give way to your feelings. You know he loved you as dearly as you loved him, and I am sure he died with your name upon his lips."

Fanchette sobbed drearily, and nestled close to Mrs. Delancy, like a poor dove yearning for a place of refuge.

"I don't know, aunty," she said in a faltering voice. "I treated him very cruelly. I was very foolish, and did not know — I told him what was not true — I shall never see him again!"

Mrs. Delancy was too prudent to continue the discussion. She said gently and sweetly, caressing the girl's head with her hand, —

"Well, a great deal happens in this world to distress us, dear, but it is better not to yield to it. I am sure you always acted like the dear good girl you are. You must busy your mind with other things."

"I cannot," said Fanchette in a low, hopeless tone. "I take no interest in anything, and feel as if I never shall."

"Time will bring you resignation, my dear child — believe me it is very powerful. Distress wears away slowly, and yours will."

Fanchette made no reply. Her hopeless expression never changed.

"You will occupy yourself with daily duties,

and find that a great resource against grief. These will not, or at least need not, be school duties hereafter, Fanchette. I came to tell you something which neither Colonel Delancy nor myself have had the courage to speak of before. We both dreaded any allusion to what would bring back this subject to your mind, but it is necessary now to tell you something which concerns you."

Fanchette looked up drearily, with an expression of dull wonder.

"What do you mean, aunty?" she said.

"I mean, dear, that Mr. Armyn gave a convincing proof before he went away that he loved you very much. He made his will, by which you inherit the Montrose property."

Fanchette looked up with her eyes swimming in tears.

"Oh, did he, aunty?" she said, "then he loved me — he loved me!"

"I never doubted it. He gave Colonel Delancy the will on the evening you came away from Montrose with Louise on my return. It was all arranged in the library, and Colonel Delancy promised to keep it a secret, even from me, and did so."

"It was so good in him! Then he loved me!"

"It was very natural. He had few relatives, and they were all distant ones, and had no claim upon him. You were the daughter of one he had loved, and he wished to feel in going away that, whatever happened to him, your future would be provided for."

Fanchette clasped her hands, and a faint glow came to her face.

"So you need not go back to teaching, as you are the mistress of a great estate."

Fanchette slowly shook her head.

"I shall never be the mistress of Montrose," she said quietly.

"Not its mistress?"

"I shall never be. It is not worth while to speak of it, aunty. It is nothing to me who has it — I think the relations ought to. It will not be me. I could not go back there, much less live there — it would break my heart."

"But that is too fanciful! It is yours — you must take it, Fanchette!"

"No, I cannot, aunty. You and uncle can do as you choose. I shall never go back there, or take it."

"I thought you were pleased," said Mrs. Delancy with an air of disappointment.

"Pleased, aunty?"

"You seemed so glad when I told you."

"I *was* glad — oh, so glad! You might understand that if you thought a minute."

She stopped, and then added in a whisper almost,

"The only comfort I have is that he loved me!"

Mrs. Delancy had nothing to reply. It was perfectly plain that any attempt at the moment to change Fanchette's resolution would be useless. She therefore gave up the idea, and made no further allusion to the subject. Caressing Fanchette's hair,

she began to converse upon other matters, induced her to go and assist her in some household employment, and thus the girl's distress was for the moment dulled by the attrition of trifles.

But Mrs. Delancy did not mean to yield to Fanchette in the matter of the will. It would be quite unreasonable, she said to herself, that under the circumstances Fanchette should surrender so fine a property to persons who had no claim upon Mr. Armyn — whom he might never even have seen, and who were connected with him by only the slenderest ties of relationship. It had been his wish that Fanchette should have his estate at his death; he was dead; the estate was Fanchette's, and she would even disregard his dying wishes by not taking it. Mrs. Delancy did not despair of eventually impressing this view upon Fanchette; but, knowing her as well as she did, felt the enormous obstacle in the painful associations connected with the place. The only means of overcoming this obstacle was to familiarize Fanchette gradually with the idea.

"It is perfectly natural," she said to Colonel Delancy one night, "that Fanchette should feel as she does. She associates every spot at Montrose with Mr. Armyn. She dreads going back there, and shrinks from the idea of living in a house where every object around her would recall him."

"Is not that rather too fanciful — a little exaggerated, my dear?" said the Colonel, in the privacy of his curtained couch.

"It is not at all fanciful or exaggerated, my

dear. It is perfectly natural," came from the opposite pillow. "One of the greatest blunders people make is to suppose that real feeling is ever a *fanciful* matter — that is to say, sentimental and irrational. It may seem so, but it is not. Do you think, my dear, that a mother is fanciful or foolish when she cries over a pair of shoes once worn by her dead child? I had a friend who did so. She cried as if her heart would break when she came upon them one day by accident — and yet they were only a poor little pair of ripped gaiters, with the toes stumped out. She cried because they had the shape still of her baby's feet."

"Poor thing — that was natural," said the Colonel, who generally allowed himself to be convinced by his wife.

"Dear Fanchette's feeling is very similar," continued Mrs. Delancy. "She was devoted to Mr. Armyn without knowing it, I think. They were together constantly at Montrose during her visit there, and from what I was told, I am sure that they had a last interview in which Fanchette refused him."

"Do you think she did, my dear?"

"I am certain she did; and now you must see how distressing it would be for Fanchette to go back. It would be dreadful to live at Montrose all by herself."

"She might induce some young man to bear her company. It would not be difficult to find one," suggested the Colonel, philosophically.

"What *are* you saying, my dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Delancy with as near an approach to the tone of Mrs. Caudle as was possible with her.

"Well, I merely suggested," — observed the Colonel, meekly.

"Fanchette will not marry any one. Gentlemen never understand women. They are a mystery to even a person as intelligent as you are. The poor thing's heart is buried in Mr. Armyn's grave. That too may seem fanciful, but it is true."

"I really believe it is."

"She will oppose taking possession of Montrose, therefore, with all her might, and give as an excuse that it ought to go to Mr. Armyn's own family. The whole truth is that she will not live there, and you will not persuade her except by humoring her."

"What do you propose, my dear? You know my confidence in you."

"You will spoil me," said Mrs. Delancy in an affectionate tone. "But I will tell you what I think is the best plan to adopt. We will drive out and take Fanchette, and when we are near Montrose I will tell you that I wish to go in and see Miss Milly, which is perfectly true. That will break the ice, and we might find just as good pretexts for other visits, and so Fanchette would grow gradually accustomed to the place. There is nothing like familiarity to wear away certain feelings. The shock at first is, of course, painful, but each succeeding one is less so. Now I have told you

my plan, and you must tell me what you think of it, my dear."

"What I think of it?" said Colonel Delancy in a tone of profound admiration. "I think it is like every suggestion you make, — a new proof of your good sense, my dear. If you were not a superior woman I would not venture upon such plain speaking, which is calculated to spoil people of deficient intellect. Your plan is excellent, and we will carry it out to-morrow. I will not add that you are an angel, my dear, but I will assert to the last gasp that you are a superior woman and a model wife. Now as that matter is decided, let us go to sleep!"

As a snore soon afterwards issued from the pillow occupied by the gray whiskers, it is probable that their owner was enjoying the serene repose of the model husband.

CHAPTER L.

AT MONTROSE AGAIN.

WHEN the Bayside carriage drove into the grounds at Montrose on the next day the appearance of everything was tranquil and attractive. Mrs. Delancy had found no difficulty in carrying out her scheme. She had simply said in passing that she really ought to go in and see her old friend Miss Milly, and Fanchette, who was leaning back in her corner, made no objection.

It was a very calm autumn day, and the afternoon was fading. Now and then a yellow leaf detached itself from the boughs of a large hickory, and floated slowly to the grass, which was still green. The long wash of the surf came up as usual from the bay, and a few crows were lazily cawing on the tops of the trees in the mild sunshine, which slept tranquilly on the grounds and the façade of the mansion.

Miss Milly sent word that she was in a very bad way with the rheumatism, and would Mrs. Delancy please to come to her room and see her? Mrs. Delancy therefore disappeared in the direction of the old housekeeper's apartment, and Colonel

Delancy took up a newspaper which was lying on the table in the drawing-room.

This was an evidence of the old gentleman's thoughtfulness and affection. Fanchette had been brought to Montrose to familiarize herself with the old scenes under their new aspect, and no doubt the first shock, as Mrs. Delancy had said, would be extremely painful. It was probable that she would cry as she contrasted the present with the past — most women, and even some men, would be apt to do that. Therefore the Colonel resolved not to intrude on poor Fanchette's grief, and took up his newspaper, and became very much interested in the intelligence of months before.

Fanchette went out to the terrace, and stood there for some minutes, looking around her. She was not at all like the old Fanchette of the "Arcadians." She wore black, and her face was thin and pale; but she was even more beautiful than before. Grief often spiritualizes the face, as well as the character. Fanchette had been one of the best girls in the world — Mr. Waring, who knew her perfectly well, had never grown weary making that statement — but then she had been extremely volatile, and the spirit of fun had been enormously developed in her. Very naturally, that fact had appeared in the expression of her face, which was mischievous to the last degree in those gay times which seemed to have passed a century before. She was a very different person now. A suffering woman had taken the place of the mercurial girl.

The faint pink of her lips was not like the old carnations. More than all, there was an expression in the great black eyes, and especially in the lips, which was a new thing with Fanchette. It is very hard to describe it. It was an expression of virginal sweetness and goodness which was quite exquisite. To have seen this expression would have silenced the most inveterate satirists of women.

Fanchette went out to the oak tree, and sat down where she had arranged her bouquet of violets that morning. There were none in the grass now, but she did not look for them and was not thinking of them. It was plain that she was absorbed in her own thoughts. In fact, she was recalling every detail of her interview with Armyn. She could see the sun rising again, and hear the singing of the birds. But she was not thinking of this so much as of his face and what he had said to her. The memory on such occasions is an unfortunate faculty, perhaps. The effect it produces is dolorous. Fanchette had no difficulty in remembering everything, and heard him tell her again that she was very beautiful. Her face flushed and her eyes filled with tears. How could she have replied with her careless laugh, her heart not even fluttering, that she was not, but was glad that he thought she was? It was mere pertness!

She got up and looked around her with a dreary expression. Every spot had its association, and the one figure was everywhere. Poor Fanchette was doing what it is very injudicious to do: she was

feeding on her grief. It is unwholesome food, but morbid appetites often control us. After all, it was possible that Mrs. Delancy's plan would fail. It did not seem probable that this grief was going to be worn away by familiarity.

After a while, as the interview with Miss Milly seemed still in progress, and Colonel Delancy's newspaper had not lost its attractions, Fanchette wandered off down the slope toward the bay. She had no particular object, and not the least intention of doing what she finally did. When she was in sight of the opening which led down to the wharf, she turned obliquely to the right and went along the banks, apparently without an object. She was, however, following the same path which Armyn and herself had followed on that evening before he sailed. Having reached the foot of the bluff where their last interview had taken place, she stopped, hesitated, drew a long, hopeless breath, and toiled up the path. It was quite steep, and a labor to walk up it. She remembered possibly that once she had had an arm to assist her, as she uttered a low moan.

She reached the top at last and saw the great expanse of the bay before her. There were no trees near the spot; the bluff was a bare headland running out into the bay. It resulted from this fact that the prospect was uninterrupted, not only in front but to the right and left.

Fanchette had come to this place again, following a natural if morbid longing; but it seemed very

unfortunate that she had done so. Under the oak she had only remembered his affectionate words and smiles, but the recollections connected with the headland were very different. He had spoken to her here as he had never done before. He had not said a great deal, but every word he had uttered seemed to have been forced from his heart. She saw his face again quite distinctly, and heard him say, "No, I love you too much," when he refused to kiss her. It was heart-breaking. Fanchette sank down on the grass, and with her face upon her right arm, which lay on the ground, cried bitterly with a sense of utter abandonment.

She remained in this attitude for nearly an hour. She had forgotten where she was, and that her absence from the house might occasion alarm. In the great desolation of her heart all other things had disappeared from view. She was thinking of the last scenes before he went, of his face, his voice, the moment when the yacht, depressing her bowsprit, seemed to salute Montrose before going away; and she still heard the gay songs of the sailors as the little bark disappeared.

As she was thinking of these songs which still rang in her memory, a very strange thing happened to her. She thought she heard them again — not in memory now, but with the actual ear. Yes! there they were, ascending to the headland from the direction of the cove where the yacht used to be moored: — then they approached the small wharf — the same old songs, if not so gay, the songs of

mariners who have breasted wind and storm, and brought back something of their pathos in their voices.

Fanchette started and rose, looking in the direction of the sound. Her yellow hair had fallen upon her black dress, and the white wrist of her right arm, encircled by Armyn's bracelet, had the print of the grass upon it. She looked through the trees — there was the yacht itself slowly approaching the little wharf! She could see not only the sails, but the hull, and recognized it perfectly.

As she looked at it, and listened to the last notes of the songs of the 'longshoremen, the poor girl tottered slightly, and sank down again with the very same moan which she had uttered when she saw the report of his death. The terrible thought had come to her that his body was on board the yacht — that the sailors were bringing home their captain to bury him in the home soil. That cruel thought nearly deprived Fanchette of her last remains of strength. An unutterable agony made the weak frame shake, and she lay where she had fallen, with her face buried in both hands, in a species of trance.

She was waked from this trance by feeling the arms of some one around her. She shrank and raised her heavy eyes; then she uttered a low cry. She was lying on the breast of Armyn, who had seen her from the deck of the yacht, and leaped ashore and ran to her.

"Fanchette! it is you, my darling! You

thought I was dead, I suppose. I was only wounded, and here I am. Are you glad to see me?"

It was not the staid Armyn of the past, but quite a youthful person. He laughed, and held Fanchette close to him, since Mrs. Delancy had written to him, "Come back soon — Fanchette is breaking her heart about you." It was wrong perhaps in Mrs. Delancy to make that announcement to a rejected suitor, but then it had broken down every barrier, and there was no reason why Armyn should not draw Fanchette close to his heart, caress the poor straw-colored hair, and say, —

"If you offer to kiss me again I will accept, Fanchette!"

As Fanchette made not the least effort to draw back from him, but on the contrary leaned her head on his breast, and sobbed with both arms around his neck, it is probable that this speech did not offend her.

A halloo startled them, and two figures were seen coming up the bluff. These were Maya and Mr. Waring.

CHAPTER LI.

EXIT FANCHETTE.

WHATEVER may be said, it is better to gather up the threads of a narrative and secure them — even when the narrative is so slight as this unassuming history of Fanchette.

Armyn was supposed to have been killed in the action of the Indra pass, but was only severely wounded. A month or two afterwards he was convalescent, and soon afterwards had set out on the slow and toilsome journey to the Black Sea, where he designed embarking on the yacht and returning home. The issue of the Afghan struggle had quite disenchanted him. The Emir had made a treaty with the Viceroy of India which was humiliating. Armyn had sent a protest from his sick-bed, but it was of no avail. The struggle in Kabul was at an end; and the Emir's intrigues with the Russian Nihilists further disgusted Armyn. He promptly resigned his command, sailed for America in the yacht, and only discovered on entering the Chesapeake that he was supposed to be dead. The interruption of communications in the East had prevented Waring from writing — and

thus it happened that Armyn was the first person who announced to Fanchette that he was still alive.

Mr. Waring had come back with him without a pang — his own expression. The sunny East was a fraud, he said, and he preferred the sunshine of his native land. Henceforth he was free from illusions. He was a man of experience and matured faculties, with his life-work before him — to write the great American novel which had been so long looked for. There need be no apprehensions — that great work would now appear. He had studied character of all descriptions — especially the character of females. They were superior to what he had supposed. There really was something in them — especially in Maya, even after making allowances for the disturbing influences of the honeymoon. His great work would be a volume aiming at analysis and not low amusement. Meanwhile he would resume journalism in Newspaper Row, and have Maya to smoke and chat with when he came home at night — which would not be unpleasant.

Mr. Waring delivered these remarks to Armyn, and requested to be informed what his own programme was to be.

"I am going to be married to Fanchette next month," said Armyn.

"Have you means to support a wife?" inquired Mr. Waring. "I thought Fanchette had inherited all your property."

"She is very liberal. She has given it back to me," said Armyn, "and made me a present of herself in addition."

This is the whole story of Fanchette, now Mrs. Armyn. She and her husband live at Montrose and see a great deal of the Bayside family. One day recently Colonel Delancy came and dined with him and Fanchette.

"My dear young friends," he said, caressing his gray side-whiskers, "shall I venture to give you some advice?"

"Do, uncle!" laughed Fanchette, who had regained all her roses.

"Well, Fanchette, you must love and look up to your husband; and you, my dear Armyn, must — always be ruled by your wife."

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